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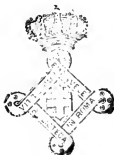
THE
BELEAGUERED HEARTH.

I Nobel.



Fair soul, how long shall veils thy graces shroud?
How long shall this exile withhold thy right?
When will thy sun disperse this mortal cloud,
And give thy glories scope to blaze their light?
O! that a star, more fit for angels' eyes,
Should pine on earth, not shine above the skies!

R. SOUTHWELL, S.J.



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THE BELEAGUERED HEARTH.



PART I.—ITALY.



CHAPTER I.

Muse not to see some mud in clearest brook ;
They once were brittle mould who now are saints.
Their weakness is no warrant to offend,—
Learn in their faults what in thine own to mend.

R. SOUTHWELL, S.J.

TEN years of persevering residence in any place is generally repaid by a feeling of contentment and of unwillingness to move. It was thought, at first, even by their Italian neighbours, that the solitude of the abode, stationed as it was on a lonely mountain's side, distant from —— about fifteen English miles, and almost as far from any other human abode (a stronger reason with them for thinking thus will become known to the reader at a later period of our narrative) would weigh on the spirits of the inmates, and eventually compel them to take flight to a more-frequented region. But there was life enough in the hearts of Walter Cowley and his wife to fit them for a much sharper trial than this ; besides, they had come with the fixed determination of settling ; it was not now taste alone that attached them to the spot, though taste had conducted them thither in the first instance : thus, at the expiration of ten years, it would scarcely be too much to say that they were *necessarily rooted* to their foreign home.

Though so fortunate as to have attained the rank of

captain before he had reached his twenty-sixth year, a wound on service having compelled a retreat on the treacherous territory constituting the home circle, he was hurried against his inclination out of the navy at nearly the same early period of his life, and almost immediately afterwards, and much in the same half-arbitrary manner, married to a sister's pet, who, most fortunately for him, turned out to be as virtuous and fond as she was beautiful and wealthy.

Italy had first marked him for her own when he was yet a boy cruising in the Mediterranean. It was distance perhaps that lent the enchantment to the view, for he was gazing on her shores from afar when she succeeded in eclipsing in his eyes even the charms of home. An impression so vivid received at that age almost invariably influences our future career like a rudder. A similar *penchant* most fortunately discovered itself, as their friendship thickened into an engagement, in the mind of the lady he married; so that there was no dispute about the direction in which they should travel, when it had to be determined where should be the favoured scene of their marriage tour.

Another point of resemblance between their respective tastes—that instinct-like love of *land* so frequently exhibited by the younger children of landed proprietors in a higher degree than by the heir—induced them to expend the greater part of their united fortunes on an estate in the neighbourhood of ——. A princely villa most romantically situated, but deserted like a *folly*, had ravished them with its own and the lonely mountain's charms it stood on as a part of the domain, before they knew the latter was for sale. But it was whilst engaged in the voyage of discovery, as they usually designated a longer than their ordinary morning ride, which had acquainted them with this congenial spot, that they formed the resolution of purchasing a place of this kind to form their first, their last, and their only home.

The opening of our narrative dates ten years subsequent to the period of this purchase. The Cowleys had by this time found that, so far from acting as a hindrance to the enjoyment of society and the cultivation of friendship, their solitude gave forth an odour which attracted visitors to a greater extent than was always agreeable. By this time, too, they had a family, which, however, seemed likely to be con-

fined to two sons. It is necessary now that we should proceed at once to make the reader acquainted with the respective characters of these children.

Reared with the help of Italian nurses, Willibald and Simon, at the ages of ten and nine, spoke Italian and English equally well, and felt and thought at once like Italians and like Englishmen. They were, nevertheless, as dissimilar in character as they were united in affection—each admiring in the other the qualities he did not possess. Both, therefore, were *amiable*, but all visitors at the house preferred on every account the elder; and his mother watched the development of his admirable talents and refined tastes with an interest which was never awakened by the corresponding changes in the capacity and disposition of the younger. It was otherwise with the father, who, so long as he found both equally good, esteemed and valued them equally.

During the boyhood of these brothers the sunny apartments of the Villa —, which for our convenience we shall in future style the Villa Algorouki, presented a scene of tranquil happiness which no indifferent spectator could witness without delight. How consoling to the father's ear, early in the morning, was the sound of the pianoforte, struck by the hand of an obedient and docile child, who was learning music with grateful eagerness! Then again, somewhat later in the day, when he looked into the airy, spacious chamber in which his boys sat at their studies with a Dominican friar, who visited them thrice a week to render this assistance! But most of all did he relish the long summer evening recreations of his lively, light-hearted boys, who wandered about the terraced garden and pleasure-grounds stretching up the gently-sloping mountain's side. Both were great lovers of nature; and birds, beasts, insects, stones, and plants, successively underwent their learned scrutiny; so that they were always busy—out of doors, in collecting or observing—in-doors, in prosecuting the inquiries originated by the variety of natural objects by which they were surrounded. They were also both great readers, and might often be seen separated for hours together, each enjoying in a temporary solitude the silent conversation of his author.

The habits of the father and mother were in most respects such as to adapt them well for the occupation of rearing their

children in this manner. The former, after his marriage, had resumed the studies which had been prematurely cut short on his going to sea. His natural abilities qualified him to profit much by reading, which was his favourite pursuit, so that, with an extensive library, to which he had constantly made additions, he had become by this time what Bacon calls a "full man." He was withal reflective and philosophic. Politics interested him little; and as he preferred the study of history to every other subject, a residence in a foreign country was not attended with inconveniences of the kind which are generally experienced by persons whose reading connects their thoughts with the lucubrations of the living writers of their own country.

Mrs. Cowley loved Italy in obedience to a direction her thoughts had received even in the nursery. She, too, possessed good natural abilities, and was accomplished. A peculiarity, with which the reader will become fully acquainted in the course of these pages, arose from the predominance in her disposition of her mother's temper and turn of mind, who was a native of Andalusia.

CHAPTER II.

I dwell in Grace's court,
 Enrich'd with Virtue's rights;
 Faith guides my wit, Love leads my will,
 Hope all my mind delights.

R. SOUTHWELL, S.J.

CAPTAIN and Mrs. Cowley were good practical Catholics, without being in the least what is called spiritual. By this is meant that religion with them was altogether a task. They complied, it is true, with the imperative requirements of the Church, and this they did with exactitude, so far as externals were concerned, but never with the whole heart. Though great readers, they never had the slightest fancy for the study of the lives of the Saints, and, except during the season of Lent, a spiritual treatise was never seen in their hands. Thus, although capable of educating their own children to a certain extent, they were not qualified to assist in

the conduct of the spirit of one of them at least, after it had reached the condition which is accompanied by the marks that, to parents whose spiritual discernment has been more cultivated, usually discover the designs of Almighty God with reference to the future life of a child. Unfortunately, too, the parents in the present case lacked the simplicity of uneducated people, and therefore had little inclination to provide for the proper guidance of the souls of their children by calling in the assistance of an enlightened director. What was enough for themselves they considered sufficient for other people, and regarded as a pretence the inability professed by many of their friends to discern and obey the motions of divine grace without frequent conferences with one skilled as an expositor of the "*internal speech of Christ.*"

At the age of eighteen their eldest son exhibited all the elements of a fine character. Yet he was giddy in the extreme—that is, the invisible and the visible world exercised over him almost an equal influence. He admired the resplendent virtues of Christ our Lord, but was not yet firmly attached to him, and played about him rather than made any attempt inwardly to conform himself to any of those instructions which point out the way to perfection. Yet he saw he was spoken to—that he was invited to a conversation and an intercourse of a closer and more honourable kind than could be conceded to the cold and formal homage he had rendered hitherto. To the eye of an ordinary observer there was something peculiarly attractive in the devotion, such as it was, he exhibited, because it had all the appearance of complete sincerity; that is, it was accompanied by marks of self-denial, as if he really loved more than he cared to discover even to the object of his love—a delusive but pleasing spectacle. This, with a countenance of the noblest stamp, fine features, and the figure of an Apollo, surrounded him wherever he went, as well among men as women, with ardent admirers; who, filled with confidence in his modesty and humility, which appeared to them perfectly invincible, took pleasure in giving evidence of the regard they entertained for him. Many of the saints have been exposed to this kind of temptation, and have, one and all, testified by their conduct that it is one which it is foolhardy not to fly from, where the

means of doing so are at hand. Their reason for so doing, though not always expressed, may be stated to consist of a regard for others as well as themselves; for this fondness is improperly directed towards any human creature whilst it seizes on the spirit of the object of it with a paralyzing violence which can be resisted only for a short while, without an especial grace, vouchsafed only where the conflict has been imposed and the victory ordered. Willibald Cowley, however, was not versed in the science of the saints, and he was conscious of no sin in continuing to live in an atmosphere so trying. Nor did he for a long time experience anything consequent upon all this admiration but a reciprocal devotion to his numerous lovers. Everything seemed to him very nice. He enjoyed life. He loved his fellow-creatures—what could he do better?

CHAPTER III.

She makes thee seek, yet fear to find,—
To find, but naught enjoy;
In many frowns, some passing smiles
She yields, to more annoy.

R. SOUTHWELL, S.J.

BESIDES being intimately acquainted with every noble Italian family in the neighbourhood, and with several of the same and of an humbler rank in ——, with which city they held a constant intercourse, the Cowleys were incessantly making new acquaintances with English people. This arose from the frequency of the arrival of tourists provided with strong letters of recommendation to them; for the Villa Algorouki and its English inmates figured so attractively in the letters and the verbal details, on their return, relative to their experiences in and about —— of those who had first become acquainted with them after their arrival there, that few of the English travelling gentry were satisfied with what they had done in this locality unless they had been to the Villa Algorouki.

But it was far from designedly that the Cowleys had got into all this gaiety, and they sometimes talked of adopting

some efficacious means of reducing it to the condition of a neighbourly intercourse with a few Italian and one or two English Catholic families. Visitors from —, the distance being considerable, seemed generally to expect an invitation "to spend the day," at least, if not the night, beneath their roof.

It was one of those very beautiful days which oppress like ill-gotten wealth; because they make us feel as if we were in heaven, though they cannot make us forget our unfitness for such a state of enjoyment. The Visible in Italy meets the eye with such vivacity that it is almost impossible there to live without constantly confessing to her charms and attractions. The inhabitants themselves, in general, alone can do this; and even among them the number is comparatively small whose intellectual activity takes a course wholly irrespective of these visible objects.

The occupants of the English travelling-carriage, which was now half-way on the road from — to the Villa Algorouki, however, were so full of that description of high-mindedness which shrinks from confession of any kind, that they said nothing; even the young lady with the sketch-book scanned the forms of things, as they slowly wound among the hills, without deigning to utter a monosyllabic exclamation indicative of admiration; though, from her appearance, it was very clear that she *must* admire everything beautiful to the eye.

Sophia Butwell had been bred from her cradle in habits of self-indulgence. Her will, naturally strong, had acquired an immense power by the confidence it had derived from its numerous victories. Her father, a wealthy Protestant Tory baronet—a man of the world, though not a rake, with enough high-churchism in him to secure for him a prominent position among the respectables of the class to which he belonged, and to place his interior wholly beyond the reach of the sympathies of the less sanctimonious of the same class, was extremely indulgent;—indeed, he made a merit, as if it indicated humility on his part, of submitting most of his opinions to the criticism, and of modifying them according to the suggestions, of this only child. Thus her will carried with it the whole force of her father's as well, the mother's also being equally united to it.

Besides being accomplished and endowed with excellent talents, she was skilled in the art of defeating observation. She could oblige the generality of people to think of her exactly as she wished. It was only at the pianoforte that she showed on all occasions that the tide of passion was intensely strong in her. The solid, raking touch, faultless execution, and well-attempered impetuosity, made a language together at once pleasing in itself, and potent to reveal the *nature* of the player.

She was also favoured by nature in regard to the form of her features and the hue and texture of her skin. She had a still, watchful eye, but one that expressed intelligence of the most universal kind. It was blue. Her hair was flaxen, but of a rich subdued tint, showing more of the nervous than the sanguine temperament. She was so fair, without the slightest appearance of ill-health, that the first impression produced on a beholder was that she used cosmetics. The absence of strong contrasts in the colouring, which sometimes leaves a face expressionless and vapid when it cannot be called deformed, only had the effect, in her case, of making one more sensible of the expressiveness of the whole countenance, which depended much for what was powerfully attractive about it on the excellent form of the mouth, and a nose inclining to the aquiline, but only so much so as to impart the Roman conquering, without injury to the feminine, character of the whole face. Her brow resembled Napoleon's: you could see it thinking.

As the outward charms of a female constitute a material element in her influential power as a member of society, the reader will excuse this attempt at a full-length portrait of our *heroine*. She was in height above, by an inch perhaps, the middle stature. Many ladies of our acquaintance, if we may judge of their taste by what they display in their own figures, would have thought her waist too thick; but the masterpiece of Praxitiles enables us confidently to say that her figure was perfect. Her gait was clean and sprightly. All her movements were "clever," and gracefully impatient; so that by them alone she imparted a notion of the interior, which filled the mind of the beholder with cogitations of a mixed character—partly favourable, partly unfavourable, and withal rather confused. Her foot was small and finely formed.

In her dress she displayed the quickness of her understanding, which could never be distanced, and the penetration of her taste, which could never be mystified by "the fashion." She did not fascinate by looks alone, but the spontaneous activity of her mind subjected her to a clash of the spirit with every person she spoke to, which was in general as flattering to the other party as it was humiliating to herself. Yet the leading expression of her countenance told at once of an unscrupulous, disdainful, and contentious disposition. There was also that centralizing look, the usual, if not necessary, result of the absence of divine grace in the soul, which, when combined with beauty and tact, acts so fascinatingly on the imagination of those who recall not incessantly the nothingness of the party whose ephemeral power they cannot but feel, though they effectually resist it.

Whilst the carriage approached the Villa Algorouki, the inmates of the latter were busily engaged with their usual morning occupations, all enjoying the quiet, and ardently hoping they should have this one day entirely to themselves. They had all been that morning, it being the octave-day of a great festival—Corpus Christi—to Holy Communion, and found themselves in consequence more than usually wishful to conserve the meditative mood into which the participation in this glorious sacrament had cast them.

Willibald was sauntering on the spacious terrace with the first volume of the works of St. Thomas in his hand, reading with an unusual interest the life of the saint which was prefixed to the collection of his works. It was, therefore, with a feeling of intense disgust he saw driving up the carriage of Sir Francis Butwell, which, being open, enabled him to see that it contained strangers. He immediately retreated, and, having entered his own sleeping-chamber or cell, as he chose to call it, bolted the door, and continued his reading with a firm determination of not leaving his retreat until it should be represented to him that he *must* do so. Twice a servant came to his door, but to no purpose. His mother at last, after the expiration of an hour, came and said, "Willi, you must come down. They are friends of your uncle Henry."

Willibald now approached the room. Other visitors were entering, and were announced as he presented himself;—Italians. Among these, again, was a young lady possessing

charms of a very striking kind, which were quickly noticed by Miss Butwell. They were intimate friends of the Cowleys, and indications of their intimacy came strikingly into view in the extraordinary animation with which they spoke of matters interesting to both parties. A profession had taken place that morning at a neighbouring convent—the party professing being an elder sister of the young lady spoken of above. As this conversation went on, Miss Butwell, for the first time in her life, found herself thoroughly mystified and thrown into the shade. Sir Francis, too, who in his native land had ever distinguished himself by his Quixotic zeal as an opponent in Parliament to every measure indicating a disposition to do common justice to Catholics, was quite at a loss how to look and what to say, whilst the particulars of the late ceremony and the leading features of the sermon preached by a near relation of the novice were described, with every mark of genuine interest, by the young Italian lady; whose beauty excited the admiration of himself equally with his wife and daughter.

The mysterious power, seldom under our own control, by which we reveal, without the aid of words or looks, the elementary operations of our will with reference to another, was possessed by Sophia Butwell in an eminent degree. Willibald was the individual in the present company whom it chiefly molested. He could not remain insensible of her presence, and at last found himself utterly incapable of concealing the direction his attention had taken, so that he was forced to address the lady, though he knew not what to say. Being ignorant of her religious tenets, it so happened that his observation was unintentionally calculated to place her prejudices as a Protestant in a rather ludicrous point of view. Sophia, though well educated in other respects, knew scarcely anything of religion, and was afraid of betraying her ignorance in the reply that seemed needed in vindication of her dignity.

Sir Francis here took fire, and made a magnanimous confession of faith.

"We, as Protestants, you know," said he, in a loud, clear, fearless voice, "look upon all this as gross superstition."

A profound silence, which lasted two or three minutes, succeeded this observation. At last Willibald, seeing that no one else purposed replying, made answer.

"Perhaps," said he, with a gentle laugh, at variance, rather, with the tenor of his somewhat saucy answer, "being now beyond the fogs of Protestantism, you will have opportunities, not easily to be enjoyed in England, of discovering your mistake in this matter."

"I can honestly assure you," was the rejoinder, "that nothing I have seen yet in this land of light has served to shake my conviction, that it is the glare of an illumination made with hands, rather than the light of Heaven, that encompasses me. It is the boast of Christianity that it proves the holiness of its origin by its effects on the manners of those professing it; indeed, at its commencement, it was manifested by no other means."

"Because all other means were denied it. But I partly agree with you, and now invite an investigation of the manners of the Catholics of this country, in the conviction that, bearing in mind what the manners of Protestants generally are, you will speedily be convinced that the marks of a divine origin preponderate wonderfully in our favour."

"Beginning," said Sir Francis, smiling, "with a recognition of the piety of the banditti, which, I will admit, is very extraordinary."

"You have, indeed, hit at once upon the very fact I should place at the head of those proving the superior power of the Catholic religion. 'I came,' said our Lord, 'to call *sinners*, not the *just*,' &c.; now in England it is 'the just' alone who exhibit any signs of an inward attachment to the doctrine of Jesus Christ. A religion which is so partial in its attractions, which is palatable to the decently-living man, but nothing to drunkards, harlots, and thieves, is altogether dissimilar to that which first presented itself to men in the person of Christ. Though I should be very careful how I uttered such a speech in their hearing, I have little doubt that the majority of the men now engaged as bandits in this country will die penitent. They are mostly of the nature of the Prodigal, in whom we are not told that the love of his father was entirely extinguished, when he was feeding on the husks of swine in a foreign country. Let, therefore, the piety exhibited by these evildoers rather excite in you admiration of the long-suffering of Him whom they still cannot help *liking*—I must not, I suppose, say *loving*—in the midst

of their wickedness, than contempt of the Church; which perfectly understands the policy, if such an expression may here be made use of, of our Lord in permitting for awhile the continuance of worship without obedience."

"But what is this," replied Sir Francis, "but faith without works! I understand now, how it is that the Irish, with all their pretended reverence for holy things, are still withal so drunken, and, in every respect, good for nothing."

"In criticising the conduct of the Catholic Church, an English Protestant may be proved, in every word he utters, to be criticising the conduct of our Lord in his capacity of pastor. With an appearance of honest simplicity, which, in the eye of a Catholic, is but carnal-mindedness confessed, they reply to everything which is said to enlighten them, with an 'I can't see how;' and yet these blind would be leaders of the blind. Would you have your son profess infidelity, and neglect to go to church on a Sunday, because he is just now rakish in his habits? Let me rather say, would you have your son cease to show you all marks of affection and respect, in addition to the misdoings which affect only his own interests? In the same way exactly does the Heavenly Father of these men feel towards them. Go on now to a more respectable class, in whom immorality is conspicuous, in company with habits savouring of piety; to what, again, is this attributable?—the power of divine grace? You would say, to the influence of a superstitious religion, which, whilst it holds the understanding in subjection, has not power to purify the heart."

"Precisely so."

"Turn, then, your eyes," resumed Willibald, "to another set of persons. The inhabitants of this convent have given up all to follow Christ—money, love, display, and literature; all have they given up that they may become more acceptable in His sight. The manners are affected here, at all events, and by the same superstitious religion to which you just now denied the power of influencing the manners of its members. Is not this like a person finding fault with a school because the idle in it are not equally proficient with the industrious? or with the management of a parent, because all his children are not equally sensible and obedient?"

"But how frequently," said Sir Francis, "is it found that

the professions of these religious souls are wholly at variance with their daily conduct, and that, indeed, the only difference between them and worldlings is, that they are more hypocritical! Not long since I read the following passage in an old 'life' of St. Ignatius Loyola. I was so struck with it, as showing that facts in this controversy will serve us much better than fiction—for I am not one of those who believe all to be true which is related in 'The Memoirs of Maria Monk,'—that I made an extract of it."

As he spoke, Sir Francis drew out a pocket-book, and read as follows:—

" 'St. Ignatius, while he endeavoured his own perfection, did not neglect that of his neighbour. At those hours which were not employed in study, he made it his business to withdraw souls from vice, by examples, or by edifying discourses. This his zeal did very much appear upon an important occasion. There was out of the town, between the new gate and the gate of St. Daniel, a famous monastery of nuns, called the Monastery of the Angels; this name did not very well agree with those religious: they lived in a great libertinage, and, abating their habit, were perfect courtesans. Ignatius could not, without horror, see such an abomination in a holy place; notwithstanding, he judged, that how violent soever the disease was, violent remedies would have no good effect; and that, whereas religious persons who have forsaken God are more difficult to be converted than those of the world, they are to be managed with greater caution and tenderness.' "

On looking up from the paper containing this extract, there was an expression on the face of the reader which seemed to say, "I triumph painfully." Willibald, however, soon helped him down from the altitude which thus affected his delicate stomach.

"Everything depends here," said he, "upon the party with which the Church is to be identified."

"Surely," replied the baronet, "there can be no question that the convent is that party. Have you not just drawn my attention to the fact that the religious life is the Church's glory; and the ordinary life of those we daily meet in society, her sorrow?"

"Even so; but I have now to add that the religious life

is only her glory because it is that in which the perfection of the canonized saints is more frequently imitated successfully. Of course, you understand that the saints, whom we invoke in our prayers, constitute the representative body of the Church's holiness ; but this being the case, St. Ignatius, not the convent, here represents the spirit of the Church,—still merciful and zealous for the salvation of souls, like its heavenly founder ; whilst in the wretched condition of the nuns we recognise the frailty of our nature, of which all are to be equally mindful. 'Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.' As our Lord dealt with the woman taken in adultery, so did St. Ignatius with these adulterous spouses of Christ."

"You have an answer for everything, I see," said Sir Francis, pocketing his extract with a good-humoured smile, and looking as if not a word had been said, up to the present moment, which told against his position.

"So then," continued Willibald, in a perorating tone, "this seems to be the conclusion our conversation conducts to, viz., that the union of these two appearances, great laxity and great faith, is the mark of the presence of the Church of Christ in a people. Where the influence of a superstition for its own objects is as strong as that of the Catholic Faith, you will rarely find a violation of the code of morals attached to that superstition,—the Hindu, how proverbially devout ! I leave you to enlarge the list of examples ; but the meek rule of our Saviour exposes the king to innumerable insults. 'I came unto my own, but my own received me not.' Though he is so powerful, and will be ultimately so inflexible, the clemency of this Great One so operates that the most timid of his subjects become attached to him at last by love rather than by fear. It pleased our Lord better that the thief on the cross lived a robber, and died an ardent lover, than it would had his life been decent in appearance and in fact, and his death unaccompanied by the same sentiments of devotion and gratitude. Charity, you know, is the only thing in our miserable souls which renders us other than tinkling cymbals."

Whilst Willibald was speaking thus Mrs. Cowley had risen, and had rung the bell to inquire whether the dinner or lunch was ready. The sound of the bell, and the last words uttered

by Willibald, struck the ears of the company simultaneously, thus causing a laugh which ended the conversation.

Although they accepted the invitation, the Butwells had received in the midst of their respective souls such a notice of the difference subsisting between their condition, spiritually speaking, and that of the Cowleys, that they could not talk, and were quite delighted to make their escape, when they thought they could do so with a good grace.

As they drove back, Sir Francis made every now and then an observation about the Catholic religion, but his wife and daughter remained silent, the cogitations of the latter being chiefly concerned about the means of achieving another kind of victory than that which her father had recently contended for, as the following epistle will show. She had had her eyes fixed on Willibald's face during the whole of the argument, and was much more intent on the study of his character than on the drift of his reasoning.

CHAPTER IV.

Ah, life, the labyrinth of countless ways,
 Open to erring steps, and strew'd with baits
 To wind weak senses into endless strays,
 Aloof from Virtue's rough unbeaten straits—
 A flower, a play, a blast, a shade, a dream,
 A living death, a never-turning stream!

R. SOUTHWELL, S.J.

THE humour of our heroine, at this period of her life, discovers its character in the letter referred to at the end of the last chapter. Addressed to a bosom friend resident in England, it was so long that the reader will thank us for suppressing all that concerns not our object in alluding to it.

SOPHIA BUTWELL to EMILY WORTLEY.

DEAREST EMILY!—You will be surprised to hear that I have been somewhat thrown off my centre since I last wrote; but still more when you are told whom by and under what circumstances. A stripling Papist took it into his head the other day, without the slightest provocation, and merely, as it

seemed to me, for the diversion of a party of the same way of thinking, to quiz my Protestantism, and so subtly was this done, that before I could recall a word of what I had learnt on the subject of religion from the sermons and lectures of your worthy brother, he had pinked me two or three times. The wretch touched me, too, in a part I was never wounded in before. It is a place so difficult to get at, that I have not yet been able to apply any remedy, and have, in consequence, been able to think of no creature but mine enemy ever since. Not content with committing this flagrant breach of the peace, I find him haunting my imagination constantly, as though he would also arrogate to himself the office of judge in my regard. Can you conceive greater impudence? and yet it is most true that I do nothing but think of what I shall say in my defence the next time I meet him. You would say, The best way of dealing with animals of this description is to cut them both in thought and deed. I have some thoughts of doing so; but then, again, the creature is amusing, and I would rather revenge myself by a *coup* similar in its nature to that by which he has succeeded in giving me so violent a shake, than by any other way. You must know, also, that I am refreshed and renewed in spirit by looking at his face. In fact, this it was that chiefly annoyed me, that his knock seemed to be given *because I was admiring him*, though how he knew this, I cannot tell. There is, too, a look about him bespeaking what one might call agility of spirit, and seeming to miscall me Heavy-sides, which has rather put me on my mettle. So that, like Cœur de Lion on his way to the Holy Land, who stopped at the island of Cyprus to chastise the king for impudence, making him do homage for his crown, I am in the mind, notwithstanding the weighty nature of my main enterprise, to give him a broadside *en passant*.

By the way, all this comes of our visit to the Villa Algorouki. I was certainly never in a place which aroused in me so many entirely new ideas, and stimulated my curiosity in regard to the nature and habits of "mortal man," as this same Villa Algorouki. Whilst we were there, there came into the room a party of Italian callers. One, a girl of about nineteen, was truly lovely. I could hardly understand at first, when I saw her grasping the hand of my friend just

described, *what it all meant*; but I soon found, by the zest with which they spoke of "the religious state" (this is a phrase I have only just picked up—it means the state of a monk or nun), that they were harder within than they outwardly appeared to be, and that they were but breaking a lance at the very moment that the outward gesture became so indescribably interesting. I can hardly understand what these people are after; in the mean time my plans are mature: I am determined, notwithstanding the sharpness of his bite, and the inaccessibility of his retreat, to "draw the badger."

* * * * *

Yours, &c. &c.,

SOPHIA BUTWELL.

CHAPTER V.

O soul! do not thy noble thoughts abase
To lose thy love in any mortal wight;
Content thine eye at home with native grace,
Since God himself is ravish'd with thy sight.
If on thy beauty God enamour'd be,
Base is thy love of any less than he.

R. SOUTHWELL, S.J.

THE stroke, half-playfully bestowed, whose effects, in one direction, appear in the letter just quoted, involved the giver, soon afterwards, in difficulties which, at the time, he could never have imagined himself destined so soon to be encompassed by. The following morning, on his first waking, Miss Butwell's image rushed into his mind before he could sprinkle himself with holy water and make the sign of the cross. He felt exactly as if, by merely speaking to her in the manner he had done the day preceding, he had entangled his own spirit with hers. It was in vain he endeavoured to forget the steady glance, which had been the sole means by which Miss Butwell could resent the animadversion he had seemed to indulge in at her expense; the more he strove to banish it from his thoughts, the more vivid became his recollection of it, and the more charmed did his soul become at the thought. Though he had previously come

in close contact with many great beauties, he found himself, now, affected in a way quite new to him, by the charms of this cool-looking Inglesse. After the lapse of a few days, he began to suspect that the thought of her was of the nature of a temptation. At the end of a month its malignant character was fully declared.

In a conversation he had recently had with his ordinary confessor, the latter, for the first time, had expressed his conviction that Willibald was called to the religious life. The announcement had excited considerable dissatisfaction, and the young penitent had boldly intimated that it was not his intention to give the suggestion any entertainment. It was owing to the existence of this petty disagreement between his confessor and himself, that Willibald forbore to make any allusion to the new temptation he had become the victim of, at least in any way that could afford an accurate idea of the extent to which it went, and of the grounds there were for fearing its continuance and speedy revival, should it cease after a while. On this account, no remedy of proportionate power could be recommended. The confessor, imagining he alluded to merely passing thoughts, gave a few words of general advice, just as he had a hundred times before on hearing of such temptations.

Willibald was equally indisposed to allow his brother or any other living creature to dream, whilst his words remained satirical, that his thoughts were wondrous pleasing and fond. There was another, too, whom he had lately avoided conversing with in his usual intimate and confiding way. This was a no less exalted, wonderful, and adorable being than our Lord Himself. Up to this period he had been wont (it seemed his nature to do so) to raise up his heart when at prayer with so much confidence and fervour, that the equivalent of a sensible interview with his Divine Master was the result; but he had chosen of late to be more humble (as he was pleased to style himself) at his prayers—more humble and more stupid he ought to have added.

Thus was he gradually, and almost insensibly, yielding to the power of this dangerous temptation, when he was suddenly made fully aware of his danger, by finding himself committed to a struggle with a suggestion so vile as to make him fear he had already lost the favour of God.

Hitherto he had lived in habits of innocence without difficulty, and so cheerful a view did he take in general of the Christian's warfare, that it might be said of him that, up to this time, he had never for one moment dreamt of going anywhere but to heaven after death. He now began to grow uneasy, and to wish he had never seen Miss Butwell; because from the first he had determined that he could never marry her; first, because she was a Protestant; secondly, because there was not enough of innocence in her appearance to satisfy the requisitions of his beau-ideal of a wife. At last, his uneasiness increased so much, that, however reluctantly, he was compelled to speak to his confessor more explicitly upon the subject.

"With you it will ever be thus," said the latter one day as they conversed together. "If you do not continue to direct all the powers of your soul in a contemplative spirit towards the Master, in whose *sole* service some souls alone can live without forming *liaisons* of a base and grovelling nature, like those which so frightfully enslaved the spirit of the glorious St. Mary Magdalen before that Master presented himself to her, just in the same way that he has so often to you, you will become the sport of the devil, whenever he can bring to bear upon your susceptibilities an instrument of sufficient power to effect the object he has in view."

"What, then, cannot I marry?" replied Willibald, somewhat resentfully.

"Do you really wish to marry?"

"Not at present."

"If Miss Butwell were a devout Catholic, would you marry her?" continued the confessor.

"I think I *never* could," was the answer.

"That *never* cannot have in it more than the asseveration by which you made known that you are not for hell: it is but the expression of a present feeling. If you do not have recourse to the practice of elevating the mind to God in the way becoming one called to the religious state, you will be *forced* to seek her hand in marriage in order to avoid the commission of spiritual adultery, at least."

"I have no wish to marry, and yet I cannot bear the idea of joining a religious order. I should like to lead a rambling life—perhaps to make a pilgrimage."

The confessor made no reply. He saw that the conversation was about to degenerate into a mere interchange of ideas, which would just enable his penitent to rid himself of any useful impressions he might have received from what had gone before, and nothing more.

As he walked home, the friar did nothing but think again and again how true it is that parents in general act towards their children as if they were more afraid of prejudicing them against the world than of implanting in their breasts a disrelish for heavenly conversation, or the state of children of God. What might not this soul have been now, had it been properly supported by the parental hand when it was too weak to persevere alone in those interior ways for which it showed an aptitude and an inclination at so early an age. How clear to me it is that he was made to contemplate and to reflect the Sun of Justice only—unlike his father and his brother, who are framed so well to become centres themselves, or servants farther removed from the speech of the Divinity, that they may be the better fitted to execute it!

Cecilia Bianconi, the young Italian lady whose beauty had softened Miss Butwell's heart and won the favour of her critical pen, had from her youth been on terms of intimacy with Captain Cowley and his family. But with none was she so intimately acquainted as with Willibald, whose admiration of the religious state, in theory, had made his conversation sweet and consoling to her sister, now professed, and edifying to herself, who was timidly encouraging the hope that the Lord designed to call her, too, to serve him in the same privileged state. When these two met, their hearts enjoyed repose, for each found in the other what it could not always find in itself, viz., the spirit of God. They were, indeed, each to the other as a heaven upon earth. With what exuberant and confiding ardour did he discover the predilections of his spirit to that angelic being—how generously and with what fidelity did she reciprocate this confidence; and the more intimate they became, the purer became the character of their intercourse—the more did it assume the nature of a dying to all creatures, and a living to God alone. The bright eyes of Cecilia spoke ever the same thing to Willibald,—they had in them no other speech: it was, as it were, their sole mission in his regard. With a gentle firmness and even peremptori-

ness, not unlike the severity we sometimes see exhibited by those old family nurses whom an all-merciful Providence is employing to wean young hearts that the mother dares not pain, they had, from the first day of their acquaintance, commanded him to prefer, a million times over, God and His good pleasure to all created things, and every pursuit that may be enjoyed in this transitory state. When she sang, it was with a similar effect for him; when she played, she seemed only to celebrate the perishableness, the nothingness, of the music, and the pleasure it gave rise to: and her dress, which was always handsome and gracefully disposed, seemed ever to be on the verge, like the first disguises of the Columbine in a pantomime, of changing into the attire of a Carmelites or Poor Clare.

CHAPTER VI.

Is this the harvest of his sowing toil?
 Did Christ enrich thy heart to breed him briers?
 Or is this barren and ungenial soil
 Too cold to fertilize with Heaven's desires?

R. SOUTHWELL, S.J.

THE banditti of Italy, according to the testimony of their countrymen, are, in general, nothing but a repetition, in another age and clime, of Robin Hood and his men. It would be quite unfair, therefore, to class them, as a body, with the present race of thieves in England. Every now and then, however, an individual becomes widely influential among these lawless hordes, in whom the villany of the cut-throat appears united with the daring rapacity of the brigand. A being of this kind infested the country in the northern neighbourhood of the Villa Algorouki, contemporaneously with the residence there of the Cowleys.

On the borders of their estate stood the ruins of an old castle, occupying the summit of a mountain, the strength of which, as a military position, depended rather on its detachment from other higher ground than on its height, which did not much exceed a thousand feet. From the base to the summit it was thickly wooded; for besides a thick growth of



cork, olive, and birch, intermingled with Italian fir, it bore a dense covering of underwood, nearly eight feet in depth, and utterly impenetrable; so that no tourist, however enterprising, had ever reached the ruin that lay imbedded in the middle of it. The guides who brought strangers to the base of the mountain invariably discouraged any attempt to make a passage, and when asked why the place was left in this condition, they said it was waste land, and that, time out of mind, it had been protected as such by a succession of lawyers resident at —, constituting a firm more remarkable for its tenacity of existence, than for the respectability of its connections.

Though they had often longed to visit it, for they were ardent lovers of old castles, and fond to excess of all sorts of adventures, none knew so well as the Cowleys that the ruin was wholly inaccessible without the aid, to an extent they could never venture to employ it, of the hatchet. When quite boys, the brothers had once or twice made manful efforts to penetrate the thorny barrier, but they made little progress. The ground beneath being extremely uneven, full of deep holes, and strewn with fragments of rocks, they stumbled frequently, and thus got severely wounded in the hands, and in other parts of their persons, by the thorns amongst which they fell. Moreover, owing to the great height of the underwood, they were unable to see whither they were going. The old castle, therefore, remained undisturbed, at least by any visitor they had cognizance of. As far as its dimensions could be judged of from below, and at a distance of two miles, it seemed to be extensive. The keep still remained almost entire. It was a massive square tower, composed of large fragments of a creamy-hued stone, if not of marble. Willibald and his brother envied the eagles who haunted its summit, and with a vehemence which approached the character of infatuation, longed that they could live and die there. This was their way of thinking of it, up to a period presently to be specified.

But whilst, with the public, this castle passed for an inaccessible ruin, it was in truth, and had been for years, the abode of the ferocious being to whom we referred a few pages back. To him, and those who with him were acquainted with the contrivance by which the difficulty presented in the

surrounding underwood was got over, the approach was easy enough. At the outset, a high Italian fir had to be ascended; a branch of this communicated with the branch of another tree, and thence you advanced to a third. Descending the twentieth tree, you found yourself on clear ground, from whence a path through the remaining brushwood conducted to the castle.

As among Christians there are some who seem to converse more with God and less with men than others, so among the systematic workers of iniquity do there appear to be some who enjoy a closer and a more sensible intercourse with the devil than others. A mystery hangs around them, for among men they have no confidants; interiorly, therefore, who is it they hold converse with? We speak not here of sorcerers and witches, but simply of persons remarkable, like Julian the apostate, and Greenacre, for pride and ferocity.* Compared to himself, the followers of Carmen Festa, the head of this band, were as lambs, though a more desperate and rapacious set had never been known in that part of Italy. A terrible man, indeed, must he be who had scarcely any pleasures which were not purchased by murder, adultery, or seduction. Six of the bravest of his followers had fallen under his own stiletto since he had been captain, to enable their wives to suffer seduction without impediment. Yet, notwithstanding all this villany, the men could scarcely be said to hate him; not, however, because united with his bad qualities there was one spark of anything like amiability, but simply because he was too bad to hate. None could regard him with the heart; he who had done so must have fled from him. It was, therefore, solely in consideration of his power that so many rejoiced in yielding him implicit obedience.

Carmen, therefore, was indebted to certain gifts of Nature for his present elevated position among the — and — banditti. A quick, penetrating mind,—very much the sort of mind which alone qualifies a man to contract as a

* In his "Dissertation on Antichrist," St. Alfonso says, "St. Jerome says, that from his infancy Antichrist will be possessed in a particular manner by the devil. (In cap. 7 Dan.) 'In quo Satanas habitaturus sit corporaliter'—In whom Satan will dwell corporeally,—not as in other demoniacs, whom he deprives of the use of reason and the senses, but leaving reason and liberty untouched, he will fill him with malice which will supply in him the age of other children."

railway engineer, whose quickness in the display of judgment should so much exceed that of the quickest of his coadjutors as at once to satisfy the latter that advancement for them must be by this way or none. Before he was known—for he had joined as a perfect stranger—it was first only his talent he displayed that he might seem the servant of all, and become so much the fancy of each as, in ascending to the post of chief in command, to gratify the ambition, abstractedly, of all. No sooner, however, had he got to the top of the tree, than he began to display his powers for ruling, or, at least, that one power, which is the most indispensable to the maintenance of supreme authority, and which may be defined as the power of administering correction with the most unerring judgment. By this means he had gradually acquired the unlimited influence over the minds of his followers, which distinguished his sway from that of previous captains. The relation, indeed, in which Carmen Festa came gradually to stand to his men widely differed, in almost all respects, from that usually subsisting between the head and members of a gang of thieves. Booty, of course, was the first consideration with all, but it often happened that the men executed orders the object of which could neither be understood or guessed at by them; and, frequently, attacks were made solely, as it seemed, to gratify a whim of the moment, as if the captain were a great man and they his menials. And yet none complained at—nay, most of them delighted in—this state of things, as was conspicuous in the demeanour of almost all when an enterprise of this kind was imposed upon them. That none had ever desired to be acquainted with his origin, or his way of life, previous to the present time, was a strong proof of the depth of their admiration of his natural endowments. They felt that they could judge of the past by what they saw,—that in the present they saw the past and future too. His management of funds especially excited their admiration: money seemed to multiply itself in his hands. He was careful, too, that the taste for splendid arms and finery should be fully gratified, knowing well that men are never less likely to become restless, irritable, and ambitious, than when they are much given to adorning their persons, and derive a great pleasure from the simple use of the eye. Great efforts, too, were always made to conciliate their female relations, who

were taught to dream that a sort of heroism attached to the hellish ignominy of the bandit's life.

His bodily strength was still perhaps the most splendid of his natural gifts. His agility and skill as a marksman and athlete, indeed, were marvellous; nor did study ever appear requisite to give him the mastery over any new kind of weapon. His strategy, too, and professional operations in general, were always of a kind that filled with exultation the minds of his followers. Quite unlike other captains of banditti, he was not known as such to anybody in the large cities forming the cover in which his game was preserved; though it was he, and he alone, who visited these places in disguise, in order to learn what amount of force and where the attack would be required for the capture of the next prize. At Rome and ——— he was known as El Conde de Valdonsella, and reported to be a Spaniard by birth, who, however, had lived nearly all his life in Italy. He appeared always as a man of fortune, and resided sometimes in lodgings and sometimes at hotels. It was understood, too, that he was a keen sportsman, and loved to spend weeks and months together in the wilderness, with nothing to break the silence of the marsh, the forest, or the mountain's side, but the roar of his fowling-piece. But he was always careful to divert scrutiny from his adventitious to his natural advantages by a judicious display of his skill at billiards, at fence, at whist, and at every other approved contrivance for the development and display of some power which the world makes much of. He was not, however, at all in love with the idiot wonder he was able, when desirous, to excite in polished circles. A viewless, as yet, and undefinable acquisition, constituted at present the main desire of his soul, to which he found nothing corresponding in this atmosphere. He was also too ferocious and too grossly sensual a being to feel happy in the society of "ladies and gentlemen." He was not "formed for sportive tricks," and accordingly he seldom visited Rome and ——— but on *business*. For the same reason, he was better pleased with the repulsive bearing of the English than the more courteous manners of the young men of any other nation: he took some pains, in consequence, to establish with them a better acquaintance. Their love of horses and taste for field-sports was the point of assault which gradually yielded him access

to their society. He himself was a very expert horseman, and never appeared in the streets of Rome or — but on a thorough-bred Arabian. From those of the gentlemen, he had succeeded at last in creeping into the good graces of the English ladies. This, with his skill and experience as a leader, was but to convert them in a very short time into so many maids of honour, who in that condition took care as quickly as possible to teach all new-comers that if they wanted to be *à la mode* at — at that time, they must make haste and get as thick as thieves with El Conde de Valdonsella.

One day, near to the time at which our tale begins, El Conde de Valdonsella was riding in the gardens of the Villa Borghesi at Rome, when an English carriage passed, containing a gentleman and two ladies—"Mamma, Papa, and My Dear," as he at once interpreted the apparition. They, none of them, saw *him*, but he saw "Miss," and admired her so much that he was determined to have the history at once of a little of her *future* at least, that being the only part of her existence he felt interested about. Accordingly, at a huge distance from it, he followed the carriage. There was a billiard-room within a few doors of the hotel at which they were stopping, where couriers often made their appearance in the evening. Here, drinking coffee in a corner and buried in a newspaper, the captain found that his friends were to leave Rome for — early the next day; also, that the gentleman had no fear of robbers, and wouldn't take an escort.

In towns Carmen always spared his horse, because he never knew how soon it might be wanted for a "job" like the present. Thus, his nag was ready on the present occasion, when, having finished his coffee and his *petit verre*, he went to the stable and saddled him for a ride by night.

CHAPTER VII.

Long as the fly doth dally with the flame,
 Until his singéd wings do force his fall;
 So long the eye doth follow fancy's game,
 Till love hath left the heart in heavy thrall.
 Soon may the mind be cast in Cupid's jail,
 But hard it is imprison'd thoughts to bail.

R. SOUTHWELL, S.J.

SIR FRANCIS BUTWELL had good reason for speaking somewhat feelingly of the hollowness of the piety of the banditti of Italy, inasmuch as his carriage had been stopped by a band of these desperadoes near F——, when he was on his way to —— from Rome. He made some resistance, but was persuaded at last to come to a parley, which ended in the seizure of his money and a variety of other valuables, together with some of his wearing apparel. More would have been taken, had not a party of Italian gentlemen come up, and, after a smart conflict, driven off the banditti.

The English, of course, were all gratitude, and strove, in very broken Italian, to satisfy their deliverers of the sincerity of their thanks by expressing a hope that they should see more of them after they had established themselves at ——. One of the strangers informed them in reply, that he and his friends did not live in the town of ——, but that they frequently went thither, and so hoped they should soon have an opportunity of paying their respects to "*Milor*." Sir Francis, in reply, tendered his card, and begged to be made acquainted with the name of his new acquaintance. The latter quickly complied. That he was a man of rank—so much, and no more—the Englishman made out at once, as he hurriedly eyed the card; but this was quite enough—"Honour to whom honour is due," was his maxim: in a moment, therefore, he was uncovered, and it was with no small satisfaction he read, or thought he read, in the expression of the noble stranger's countenance, as he bowed in return, in the most gracious manner possible, admiration of the exceeding politeness he, Sir Francis, exhibited. He felt inclined to say, "We English, you see, can be courteous when we please; and, when we wish to be so, who can compete with us for the graceful ease, the air of generosity, with which our acknow-

ledgments are made?" The stranger and his friends accompanied the carriage some miles farther. It was then intimated that they were within the distance of —, beyond which the banditti never venture to pursue. The usual leave-taking followed, and the individual, who from the first had seemed to be the chief of the party of gentlemen who had so well imitated the generosity of the good Samaritan, begged to be allowed to express his feelings on this occasion *à l'Anglaise*, by shaking hands. In this way he succeeded in conveying to Miss Butwell secretly, but effectually, an assurance of his admiration of her person. The air of confidence with which he squeezed her hand, and the princely bearing, breathing at once condescension and respect, forbearance and devotion, were more than she could contemplate without experiencing a resentment savouring much more of admiration and delight, than of the mere honest gratitude that was due for the service he and his friends had just rendered.

As the Butwells journeyed on towards — they of course spoke a good deal of what had just befallen them. Sir Francis being what is called in England a public-spirited man, talked of applying to the English ambassador at — for redress, and seriously entertained the idea of pressing his claims so perseveringly as to subject the kingdom of — to a bombardment by English men-of-war, in case the men who had just taken from him a little of his loose cash should fail to be arrested. Lady Butwell chiefly dwelt on the magnanimity of the noble stranger and his friends. Sophia held her tongue about this, but was amused at the adventure, and said it was the first thing that had happened since they left England which had made her feel inclined to begin her correspondence with Emily Wortley.

In her letter, partially quoted some pages back, an allusion, the reader may remember, is made to a conquest contemplated by the fair writer, of an importance far exceeding that by which she entertained the hope of making herself mistress, *pro tempore*, of the heart of Willibald Cowley. The great one here alluded to was the noble stranger to whose gallant interference her parents and herself were indebted for their deliverance from the hands of robbers. He had called on them once since their arrival at —, and had succeeded in improving the favourable impression which his first interview

had made ; at the same time, however, he had somewhat alarmed the young lady's pride by his great assurance, and had thus drawn upon himself some manifestations of her powers of repulsion. It will amuse the reader to be informed that the noble stranger, whose card had filled Sir Francis with reverence, his wife with overflowing gratitude, and his daughter with susceptibility, was in reality only Carmen Festa, who, in the character of the Conde de Valdonsella, had amused himself in the present instance by leaving to his men the performance of "the dirty work" attaching to his calling, and reserving for himself that part of the transaction which possessed him of the goodwill and admiration of his victims. Indeed, it was the frequent asseveration of this accomplished villain, that he was not to be regarded in the light of an ordinary robber, inasmuch as he as frequently captivated the hearts of the ladies as he possessed himself of their money, and so nicely managed with the gentlemen, that often they who had surrendered their purse to him on the road, opened their doors to him as a benefactor in the city.

No creature ever encountered the glance of this man without wishing he had never met him, excepting in a case similar to that of the Butwells. This arose from the indication of a strong resentful memory which accompanied that penetrating glance. Without knowing what manner of man he was, the person over whom his eyes had passed invariably felt that his existence stood, from that moment, indelibly registered on the tablets of his memory, and that, should the stranger's interest, by some unforeseen concurrence of events, at any time require it, he would have no other chance of escaping a call to serve than that depending on the unalterable designs of Heaven.

As on this earth scarcely a dwelling-house is to be found which has not some inconvenience, some annoying, or some highly offensive circumstance rendering it more or less objectionable as a place of abode, so the Villa Algorouki, "remote from cities," and unvexed by all the cares which usually accompany the comforts of a town residence, had its curse amidst its charms, inasmuch as it stood in the very midst of a region which, since the days of Salvator Rosa, had been the favourite haunt of robbers. Nevertheless the Cowleys, who did not become acquainted with the bad name attaching to it till they had themselves become as well known in the

neighbourhood as their house, had hitherto escaped molestation; and although they were well provided with arms, and kept themselves prepared for an attack at home, as well as when they were rambling in the suspected region, they lived without anxiety, and in a state bordering on downright disbelief in the reality of the perils they were thought by some of their Italian friends to be surrounded by.

A few days after the Butwells had paid their first visit to the Cowleys, as Willibald was walking along the road leading to —, he met a horseman he had occasionally seen before at nearly the same place, but who, on every previous occasion, had passed him with an averted countenance, or else so absorbed in the meditation of his own private concerns as not to notice anything around him, so that the glance was new to him which now brought his whole soul into action. "What in the world does he want with me?" thought Willibald, as he slowly advanced with the eyes of his mind, not those of his body, still fixed upon the countenance he had just beheld. It was the gaze of Signor Carmen that spoke to his soul, on this occasion, so distinctly of villainy and rapacity. Not being one of the set at — to which the Conde de Valdonsella was so well known, he was acquainted with no more than the assumed name of the impostor, and consequently there was no way of escape open to him at the present moment from the suspicions which were awakened by this meeting. There was, however, nothing in his dress savouring of his true calling—it was simply that of a man of fashion. He rode a particularly fine horse, which, being an Arabian, was light for the weight of the rider, without detriment, however, to appearances, owing to the nature of the rider's seat. It differed from that of an English "leg," in that it was more lively, giving the idea that the horse was carried by the rider rather than the rider by the horse. To compare, by way of paying him a compliment, an English horseman with a centaur, betrays a misapprehension of the genius of the English seat; but really, if the head of the horse had not been in the way on the present occasion, Willibald would have taken the Conde de Valdonsella for a centaur playing the gentleman, so much did he appear to be the soul of the animal whose four splendid legs divided the attention of the beholder with the upper man.

Willibald was almost a stranger to the feeling of fear, for the simple reason that his parents had always taken care to keep him out of the occasions of the excitement of that passion; but being of a reflective disposition, he continued to ruminate for some time afterwards on the expression of the stranger's countenance, and even after another subject had become the occupant of his thoughts, it was as though a cloud stretched between it and the light whence they flowed.

CHAPTER VIII.

O sister nymphs! the sweet renowned pair
That bless'd Bethania's bounds with your abode,
Shall I infect that sanctified air,
Or stain those steps where Jesus breathed and trod?
No: let your prayers perfume that sweeten'd place;
Turn me with tigers to the wildest chase.

R. SOUTHWELL, S.J.

LATE in the evening, three days after the meeting referred to at the end of the last chapter, the father and Simon Cowley stood on the terrace fronting the villa. The air was so mild and motionless, that the glittering concave which stretched above and around them seemed rather like a vast interior than the open air. And were they not, indeed, standing in another St. Peter's—even that whose chapter-house is the valley of Josaphat, where the successor of the last Pope, Alpha and Omega, will take his stand when he comes to judge the living and the dead? How often it happens that, when we deem ourselves most secure in this world of uncertainties, "thieves break through and steal!" The Cowleys had of late allowed a thought, savouring strongly of spiritual pride, to creep into their hearts; viz., that because they were pretty exact in the practice of their religion, the hearts of the robbers relented towards them to such an extent, as to make them feel more inclined to befriend than to molest them. Consequently, the non-appearance of Willibald so long after the latest hour at which he had ever been known to return from a solitary ramble, gave rise to surprise rather than alarm, and even pleased on account of the novelty of

the thoughts it suggested, rather than disturbed, up to an hour that informed them they should certainly see him no more that night. But even now they were not alarmed.

"If he doesn't return to-morrow," said Simon, "I shall know what has become of him. I have been expecting something of this sort for some time past. Don't you remember his talk about making a pilgrimage?"

"Foolish boy, ay!" replied the father. "As you observe, something has seemed to be weighing on his mind of late. I think he is too fond of reading ascetical works. I have once or twice hinted that the lives of the saints should not be read in the manner he reads them; viz., as if they were as amusing as novels."

It was nearly 2 o'clock A.M. before the father and son, deeming it useless to remain any longer abroad, withdrew from the terrace, and retired to their respective bed-rooms.

A month has elapsed, and Willibald is still absent. As soon, however, as the fact of his disappearance had become generally known, a report having spread at the same time throughout — that he had been seized by the banditti to be ransomed, several respectable persons resident there attested to his having embarked on a vessel bound for the island of Cyprus early on the morning following the day of his first disappearance. The instant this was mentioned, his relations were at rest, at least their apprehensions were replaced by anger, as the impression took the form of a conviction that his absence was wholly attributable to his own caprice. In addition to this, their Dominican friend, to whom Willibald had mentioned the peculiar nature of his feelings towards Miss Butwell, had come forward, and, in rather a mysterious manner, intimated that he was convinced the statement made by these persons was true. A word from a confessor goes a great way in influencing people's opinions on occasions of this kind; so, without venturing to ask any further questions, Captain Cowley, the mother, and Simon, now spoke as if it were beyond a doubt that Willibald had sailed for Cyprus with a view of visiting the Holy Land; but, then for money! even whilst they were puzzling over this, a letter arrived from himself, desiring that a certain sum should be paid into the hands of certain bankers in —, who were acquainted with his address, and would forward it to him.

This request affected money of his own. Not another word was added, hence this letter did but serve to remove from the minds of his relations all remaining doubts as to the nature of his present situation.

One day, as Simon and his preceptor, the Dominican, who, though not resident at the villa, acted as chaplain there, its distance from a church having seemed to the bishop a sufficient reason for giving permission to all the members of the family to hear their masses of obligation in a domestic chapel, sat at their studies, the following conversation occurred :—

“Willibald,” said the former, “frequently spoke to me of your idea about his vocation. I never thought he was called to the religious state, and it seems to me that his present proceedings evince a turn of a totally opposite nature.”

“They do,” replied the other; “but a turn of a totally opposite nature nearly always co-exists with, if it does not indicate, the presence of a turn for the religious state. A liability to be led and influenced by the opinions of others, a great deal of levity, and a strong sense of the beautiful and of the ridiculous, with a turn for satire, frequently appear during the period of prostration in a spirit designed for the immediate service of God. The action of divine grace converts the first into meekness; the second into contempt for the world, detachment from creatures, and a disposition to make light of sufferings; the third into the love of Jesus; and the fourth into an antipathy to every shadow of pride, whether discovered at home, or remarked in the words and conduct of others. You are familiar with the affirmation of many spiritual writers of great authority, that many souls are so formed that they could not be sanctified out of the religious state. This arises from the fact of their being parasites by nature, so that in the world they become so much entangled with the allurements which surround them, and gradually so devoted (in the way that Cardinal Wolsey was to Henry VIII.) to human beings, as, at last, to be wholly unable to serve God. Souls of this kind and in this condition exhibit to us, in the concrete, the words of our Lord—‘Thou canst not serve God and Mammon.’ It is, therefore, exactly that which has hitherto made Willibald appear generally fitted only for secular society, that, to my mind, shows him to have

been fashioned for the religious state. I bear in mind, however, at the same time, that a fitness of this kind is not alone to be regarded as a proof that God desires a person to become a religious ; that there must be, besides, some outward manifestation of the designs of Heaven ; so that I still hope Willibald will do well, though, on the contrary, I am frequently visited with strong misgivings respecting the turn he may take before another year is elapsed."

"There may be much truth in what you say," replied Simon, "and still, Father, I think you have somewhat mistaken Willibald's character. I think he will make his tour, come home, write an account of it, and then marry Cecilia Bianconi."

"Cecilia !" exclaimed the other incredulously.

"I, too, thought otherwise," continued Simon, "before Willibald's departure, but she speaks now with so much concern about his safety, that my opinion is quite changed. She and her sister, the nun, will have it that he has fallen into the hands of robbers ; and she is constantly urging us to offer a reward for his restoration. We have told her about the letter directing us to pay money into Salrini's bank for his use, yet she persists in imploring us to follow her advice."

"There could be no harm in offering a reward, at all events," said the friar.

"It would look rather fanciful."

"I should not care how it looked," replied the other, "if I thought it likely to be useful."

"Nor I either, Father, in that case ; but neither my father, my mother, nor myself, have the faintest idea that there would be the slightest use in doing so."

"But what are your reasons," asked the friar, "for entertaining so firm a belief in the inutility of such a step ?"

"I can't tell you, but so it is," replied Simon ; "we all feel certain he is travelling for his pleasure. You seemed to think so, too, once."

"But I am a little shaken now in my belief, in consequence of what you have told me about Cecilia and her sister, and because you and your good parents appear to be so marvellously well satisfied that you are right in your conjectures. An indisposition to listen to another view of the subject, in

cases of this kind, always looks to me as if it came from the enemy."

Simon laughed incredulously, and it was clear with the intention of paying no attention to the friar's suggestion. Shortly afterwards he mentioned it to his father and mother, who both answered, with an eagerness which, had he seen it, would only have increased the suspicion of their censor, that they had always thought the latter rather fanciful, and that now they were sure he was so.

"I wouldn't have him for a director on any account," exclaimed Mrs. Cowley, with the decision of a spoilt child of the Church. "I dare say," she continued conceitedly, "if the truth were known, Cecilia or her sister has been dreaming a dream, and Father Faliuja believes her to be enlightened."

"That is what I thought," replied Simon.

It was by speeches of this kind that the Cowleys encouraged each other in the belief that Willibald was quite safe, and would soon write to them a full account of his progress.

Mrs. Cowley had many amiable qualities, but she was worldly-minded in a high degree on some points. She was proud of her offspring. With the jealousy of a tigress she resented the smallest appearance of reflection on their deserts. An imperfect training had left her in the belief that ambition, which went to benefit them, could not be indulged to excess. Her wish and intention was that both should marry, though she had never yet beheld the person that was worthy, in her estimation, to become the wife of either of them. The intimacy subsisting between Willibald and Cecilia had always been viewed by her with uneasiness, and, as fast as it was banished from her mind, the suspicion returned that this young lady was in love with Willibald, perhaps unconsciously, and that, with a reprehensible simplicity, she talked to him of becoming a nun, when the real desire of her heart was to become his wife.

Mrs. Cowley knew that this thought amounted to a rash judgment, and was sinful as such; she had even confessed it more than once, and yet she was constantly acting and speaking under its influence. Nothing, too, annoyed her so much as the utterance by any creature within her hearing of a word which went to establish the possibility only of Willibald's becoming a priest or a monk. She had the same prejudice

against these holy states that many parents have to the medical profession, because by each of these the professed is obliged constantly to stand in the relation of a convenience to his fellow-creatures. Not even the promise of a mitre would have reconciled her to the choice on his part of this profession; and yet, if questioned, she could never give any idea of what career it was she wished for him. This was natural enough, because Willibald was not only in the ordinary sense of the phrase his mother's pride, but also actually was he her pride, or the embodiment thereof.

In her intercourse with the clergy she ever preserved an aristocratic bearing. She was condescending, not reverential, so that she scarcely ever became very intimate with any of them, though all who knew her respected her, and, wherever they went, spoke in the highest terms of her charity and piety. Their humble and respectful bearing, instead of operating upon her as a salutary example, had the contrary effect. Seeing herself so completely distanced in the practice of humility, she felt rather angry, and indulged her resentment by deliberately keeping possession of the place of honour they were ever inviting her to occupy. As she really possessed faith, she could not but regard the ministers of God—to whom she well knew, and often remembered, the words had been addressed by our Lord Himself, "Whosoever heareth you heareth me,"—with a sort of involuntary respect, but on every other account she hated them. People whose hearts are a prey to this feeling still often imagine they love God. It is to such persons that St. John the Evangelist spoke, when he said, "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." Strange that it should be so, yet every one who knew anything of her took Mrs. Cowley for a great lover of God: she was especially admired for the appearance of genuineness and sincerity which distinguished her piety. It seemed to every one who knew her as if she hated the reputation which her way of life—ostensibly, that of a good practical Catholic—gave rise to; it would, indeed, have been impossible for any one to make out that ostentation was among the number of her defects, since she herself was a hearty hater of *anything resembling it*: but to hate the show of a vice is not necessarily to hate effectually the vice itself. Mrs. Cowley, therefore, was anything but ostentatious in her

manners, though deeply infected with the love of her own reputation, which she watched over with a jealousy that drove all true charity out of her heart. Her style was rather that of a disciplinarian: she kept her household in good order, and was a famous lecturer. Charity appeared in many of her actions, but it was only the appearance, not the thing itself, else had she shown it where it was demanded of her. Nothing but a selfish resentment was exhibited when it was whispered to her that she should make an offering of her son to God, or, at least, with an humble resignation beseech Him to dispose of him according to his good pleasure. She little knew at that time that the salvation of her soul depended entirely on the treatment she should vouchsafe to this suit.

CHAPTER IX.

My comfort now is comfortless to live
In orphan state, devoted to mishap;
Rent from the root that sweetest joy did give,
I scorn'd to graft in stock of meaner sap.
No juice can joy me, but of Jessy's flower,
Whose heavenly root hath such reviving power.
R. SOUTHWELL, S.J.

A SHORT time previous to the day on which he had met Willibald, Carmen had become aware that the Butwells and the family of the former were on visiting terms. He had long secretly had an observant eye on the Villa Algorouki, but it was not till the moment of this meeting that he saw, from the look and general bearing of Willibald, that a divided heart, at the least, would be the certain result to Miss Butwell of a continued familiar intercourse with the latter as well as himself. In the repulsive expression of his face at that moment, Willibald beheld the dawn of an intention which was executed three days afterwards in the manner about to be described.

Intoxicated with the sweetness of a life which had hitherto been ominously free from disturbance, Willibald had continued to resist the *attrait* to a religious life which had been detected by his confessor, and to acquit himself, in his own way,

of the duties his faith forced him to recognise. Ready enough, nominally, to fly from the occasions of sin, whilst he shunned the safe road which had been pointed out as the one provided for his escape, he had talked of a pilgrimage to Palestine, but could not obtain the consent of his parents; who judged him too young and inexperienced to be trusted alone on such an expedition. His impatience, therefore, conceived itself entitled to quarrel anew with Sophia Butwell; and it was with his head full of schemes for the recovery of the liberty her arts had deprived him of, that he was wandering the evening to which we now recur. Without the slightest fear of actually yielding, for he could only love with his soul what he wholly approved of and venerated, and felt that nothing could induce him to marry one he could not love; yet, as before observed, anxieties were engendered within him as he involuntarily thought of Sophia, and remembered the warning words of his Redeemer, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." Flight, by removing us from the proximity, in which lies principally the power of such a temptation, is justly esteemed the safest remedy in a trial of this kind; but the susceptibility resulting from the latter exposes us to new dangers, turn which way we will, unless it be that provided for our escape by a merciful God, who rewards obedience, much more readily than sacrifice, with an increase of grace.

His capture by the robbers was effected thus:—it was growing dusk at the time, and he was walking briskly along a favourite mountain-path leading towards his home, which was distant about two miles, when a sound in the rear caused him to look back. A man was running as if with a view of overtaking him. Dubious of his object, however, Willibald stood still. The man in the next minute had reached him, and, before the other had time to make out whether he was a friend or a foe, had seized him by the legs, just below the knee, and thrown him on his back. Two other men came up immediately afterwards, and they soon succeeded in drawing a thick bag over his head, and in binding his arms to the body, thus depriving him of the power of offering resistance. In this state he was carried he knew not whither. He remembered only that at one time it seemed to him as if he were being carried up an extremely steep ladder, and that, after

passing through a wood for some distance, his impression was that he was being taken down a ladder of the same length and inclination as the other: after this, he was carried yet a considerable distance. At last, the men who bore him appeared to enter a subterraneous passage, for the air suddenly became cold and damp, and the sound of their footsteps hollow and ringing. Then came a flight of stone steps, the drawing of bolts at the bottom, the opening of a heavy door, which moved tardily on its hinges, an entrance into what, upon the removal of the bag, he found to be a dungeon. Fatigued with their exertions, the men were in such a hurry to be freed from their burden, that they suffered Willibald to fall to the ground like a sack of grain. One of them then attached a chain to his leg, whilst another, roughly enlarging the mouth of the thick canvass bag, tugged it off his head, and then accosted him in an Italian slang something similar to our English. It will be borne in mind that to Willibald both languages were equally familiar.

"Now, then," said the robber, "we must be paid for this; tumble out all the loose cash you have about you."

Willibald was at that age when, to persons of his disposition, everything in the shape of an adventure charms. Thus, so far from feeling alarmed whilst being borne away, he had felt as much delight as a child in a swing for the first time, and now, unable to view the individual who had just addressed him as an enemy, he replied, jestingly, that he hadn't the value of so pleasant a ride in his pocket. The man, pleased with this ready correspondence with the humour in which he had spoken, replied, that they would put the rest down to his account, and that he had no occasion to make himself uneasy; because the bill they should send in to his father for the trouble and expense of seizing and keeping him would be made out in faithful accordance with his liberal notions. The conversation continued until Willibald, forgetting where he was, began to regard the robber he conversed with as a very pleasant, straight-forward fellow. Not even could the shackle they had attached to him bring him to his senses, nor the darkness and solitude of his cell, when at length they left him with the promise that they would soon return with a mattress, a blanket, and some "grub," open his eyes to the true nature of his situation. He little knew at

that time what a power the spirit of evil possesses, and how quickly our frail nature is compelled to surrender its indifference and philosophy, excepting when it has been partially divinized by the operation of grace, on becoming the especial object of a hostile animosity.

One of the men who had just left the dungeon had taken a very different view of Willibald's apparent unconcern from that of his comrade, who had been so much amused by it. He was by nature timid, but as the passion of fear, like every other to which the human heart is subject, disappears gradually before a steady and systematic resistance, this man, prouder than he was timid, and coveting, in consequence, the applause which, in his sphere attends no virtue so much as that of courage, had gradually acquired an unusual degree of coolness, coupled with a daring which ever appeared sufficient for the emergency calling for its display. But, like most persons who are conscious of being indebted to study rather than to nature for the abilities that distinguish them, he was devoid of that graceful generosity which is the usual set-off of brilliant natural talents; as if the gracious Giver could not be munificent to one without being considerate to all. He was a jealous fellow, and was never satisfied with any stranger who did not appear to fear him; though the slightest appearance of timidity was noticed by him with a marvellous quickness, and just as promptly divulged to all around, and ruthlessly jeered at. Every character becomes beautiful when all its parts are displayed in a spirit of genuine simplicity; but where, through pride, an effort has been made to conceal one part and give an unusual prominence to another, a picture is often presented which we cannot gaze on without disgust. Had this man remained all his life a simple herdsman, conversing with scarcely anything living save his goats and his dog, the rather limited amount of courage with which he had been endowed by nature would have been sufficient for the exigencies of his vocation, and then he would never have been tempted to pride himself on it; but, as a robber, he exhibited traits of the most repulsive kind, and the clownish figure and pig-like expression of his countenance, which would have become a swineherd, added much to what was repulsive in him as a bandit.

When he and the other robber returned, bringing with

them the bed intended for the prisoner, the latter said, playfully, "Is it free from vermin?"

The robber, whose character has just been described, here made answer for the first time, "None of your nonsense! If you say another word like that, I'll slap your mouth for you."

The tone in which this was said was eminently exasperating. Willibald replied, without changing his manner, "Slap me, pray, anywhere but on the mouth, unless you want to get bitten, for I haven't had supper yet, and am quite in the humour for a beef-steak."

This was regarded as a deadly insult, and resented as such. Seizing Willibald by the nose, the robber boxed his ears, and, retaining his hold of the nose for some time, he made his victim stagger about like a drunken man, and ended by giving him a violent push backwards, that caused him to fall on his seat, and kick his legs up in the air.

Before he could call to mind the lesson teaching us to receive without the least resentment insults of this kind, another idea, not altogether unconnected with principle, caused him to spring up and rush upon his assailant with the view of retaliating; but the robber was in a moment beyond his reach. His companions then seized Willibald's arms, which they held at full length, whilst the other gave him twenty stripes with a chain. Willibald writhed and winced exactly like a school-boy. He had never before tasted anything so painful, and, before the flogging was at an end, had sunk to the earth, and was almost crying out for mercy. He was quite astonished at being treated in this way—filled with dismay, and cast down greatly. At the same time, he dared not utter another word to the men, but the instant they were gone, he fell upon his knees and adored God. From this moment he carefully abstained from speaking a word more than was absolutely necessary to those who brought him his food. In the full belief that he had been brought there to be made the means of extorting a ransom from his father, he began, after the lapse of a week, to wonder he had not yet been visited by the captain. Another man visited him about this time with writing materials, and desiring him, in the name of the captain, to write certain words on a piece of paper in order to show whether his hand was such as to qualify him for the employment of secretary. This was

merely done to enable the applicant, who was an expert copyist, to forge the letter which had convinced the Cowleys that the absentee was gone to Palestine ; so that, although Willibald had given a favourable specimen of his skill as a penman, nothing occurred again for a long time promising relief to the monotony of the dungeon life to which he had been consigned. An interview with the captain was the event he now most eagerly looked forward to, without, however, ever venturing to make known his desire to any of the subordinates who brought him his food. These persons were not very exact in the performance of this duty, and sometimes left him a whole day without anything to eat.

CHAPTER X.

My eye reads mournful lessons to my heart ;
My heart doth to my thought the grief expound ;
My thought the same doth to my tongue impart ;
My tongue the message in the ears doth sound ;
My ears back to my heart their sorrows send ;
Thus circling griefs run round without an end.

R. SOUTHWELL, S.J.

ONE day Cajone, so the man was called who had first insulted Willibald, made an observation to his companion, in the presence of the former, which contained as many ingredients of an irritating character as any speech of the same length could anyhow hold. It displayed, in the first place, a huge amount of national pride, combined with an entire ignorance of the claims England has to rank as one of the leading powers of Europe ; then, an utter contempt of the representative of that nation now before him, implying an idea that he was deficient in every quality entitling him to the esteem even of the rudest and basest of his fellow-creatures, with other matters of the same tendency. Being at the moment entirely off his guard, Willibald had suffered the worst impression of the man to seize his mind, at the same moment that he admitted into the very depths of his being the venom of the utterance just described. He felt astonished at the presumption it manifested, and, as the conversation

between the robbers continued in the same strain, his soul was gradually deprived of all its *vis inertiae*. One of his infirmities was an overweening opinion of the prowess of his countrymen. He was of a chivalrous temper, and could never read of the exploits of the Christian knights, when circumstances had converted the Christian warfare throughout nearly all Christendom into a visible and bloody conflict, without wishing it had been his lot to live in such times. With these tastes, he could not listen to such insulting allusions without experiencing the utmost uneasiness. He knew that to speak would be almost immediately to incur a severe bodily chastisement, yet, considering that no true knight would have remained silent in the hearing of such aspersions on the honour of his country, he said, at length, in a tone that was anything but formidable, "Do not judge of the character of English soldiers by mine. As it is with you, so it is with us ; some are strong and brave, others weak and timid. But, notwithstanding my deficiencies in these points, I should have no objection to engage in a sparring-match with any man in your gang of my own weight."

This speech affected the two hearers in a rather different manner. Cajone was daunted by it, at first ; but this very circumstance determined him to punish the challenger as soon as he should find himself in the cue to act. His companion, Diego Capriola by name, the same person with whom Willibald had conversed immediately after his arrival in the dungeon, and who had more about him of the *brave*, seemed highly amused at it. He was somewhat of a humorist, and enjoyed amazingly a display of any kind which laid bare the infirmities of our aspiring nature. He also understood better than Cajone the temper of Festa ; who, systematically and constantly, kept the energies of his men at their fullest stretch, and was an encourager of all athletic sports, and a lover of bull-dogs, whose merits he had learnt to appreciate as the frequent associate of the English officers at Malta, whither he went two or three times a year on "business." The man, too, knew, through Carmen, that the English are friends to the ring, and that Belzoni, the Italian traveller and athlete, had been defeated in a set-to with an English pugilist. He therefore felt a little more respect for the prisoner, and, laughing heartily at this unlooked for, but characteristic

display of spirit, said he had no doubt Carmen would allow him to show what he could do. He then went on to enlighten the Briton's mind a little by telling him there were heaps of men among them who could spar as well as any Englishman, and that the captain often amused himself, when he came in their way, by picking quarrels with English sailors, who, he averred, were invariably beaten on these occasions, even when fighting two against one. To this Willibald carefully refrained from making any reply; indeed, he had no sort of inclination to answer a boast which so painfully apprised him of the preponderance, in the speaker, of the creature instincts over those which are of the same origin as that teaching us to say to our Creator, Father! But the sight of this in another first made him conscious of the degraded nature of his own position just assumed, in compliance with a fancied obligation arising from the comparison he had chosen to institute between his own and the vocation of a knight-errant.

Doubts of the lawfulness of engaging in a combat of the kind he had spoken of now began to oppress his mind. Added to this, the peaceable life he had led from his childhood made him feel, when he reflected on the nature of the demands which would be made on his physical forces by a pugilistic encounter, wholly unfitted him for what he had undertaken. At this moment, recollecting having heard that the banditti always had priests at hand, for administering the last sacraments to the dying among them, he resolved to ask if he could see a priest. But as he gazed at the men before him, he could not at once bring himself to make known his wishes. They were smoking at the time, and, ever and anon, taking copious draughts of the wine they had brought into the dungeon for the use of the prisoner. Willibald, therefore, continued observant without speaking. In these two shapes, one tall, ill-made, and with a fearful predominance of the animal in the expression of his ill-natured countenance; the other short, truculent, saucy, yet equally unintellectual (the inevitable fate of human nature, without those succours from above which enable the soul to maintain its independence in the midst of the flesh's rapid and insolent growth), pressed itself upon his attention, and made him tremble at the danger of his own position. But when, at length, they rose to depart, he ventured to ask if there were a priest at hand, addressing

himself particularly to the robber who appeared to him the best-natured of the two.

This individual grinned in reply, and said that there was certainly one at hand, but that he had become so eaten up with rust for the want of use, that it was likely enough he would no longer be able to hold water or keep secrets. The man promised, however, to send him.

CHAPTER XI.

Ah, cool remissness, virtue's quartan fever,
Pining of love, consumption thou of grace ;
Old in the cradle, languor dying ever,
Soul's wilful famine, sin's soft-stealing pace ;
The undermining ill of zealous thought,
Seeming to bring no harms till all be brought.

R. SOUTHWELL, S.J.

THAT this was the first of a succession of actions by which he was being drawn into a state of reprobation, for he was quite unable, on reflection, to reconcile the tenor of those evangelical counsels which recommend a total renunciation of that liberty which appeared to him to be so freely and justifiably used by the Christian heroes of the middle ages, was the oppressive thought he vainly hoped to get rid of by conferring with the priest, who made his appearance shortly after the departure of the robbers.

The feet bare, and without sandals, and the whole of the ankle exposed, owing to the scantiness of the patched and threadbare habit, seemed the most proper accompaniment, for appearance's sake, of the black hair, pale sallow face, thin beard, and small penetrating eye, which presented themselves at this moment to the prisoner's gaze. The leading expression of the stranger's countenance was that of a man accustomed to look up to others—it was, therefore, rather abject, and calculated to inspire distrust, where it failed to give rise to a feeling of devotion. Willibald was so accustomed to view with veneration every one wearing the garb of an ecclesiastic or a religious, that the thought never occurred to him, "This is, perhaps, an outlaw—a fallen one ; he has been

excommunicated, and cannot hear a confession ! ” He immediately asked for the friar’s blessing, and then proceeded to put his question relative to the lawfulness of fighting under such circumstances as attended his engagement to fight. The friar replied, “ The Council of Trent has the following on duelling :— ‘ The detestable custom of duelling, introduced by the contrivance of the devil, that by the bloody death of the body he may accomplish the ruin of the soul, shall be utterly exterminated from the Christian world. Any emperor, kings, dukes, princes, marquises, counts, and temporal lords, by whatsoever other name entitled, who shall grant a place within their territories for single combat between Christians, shall be therefore excommunicated, and shall be understood to be deprived of jurisdiction and dominion over any city, castle, or place which they hold of the Church ; and if those places be held as a fief, they shall forthwith escheat to their direct lords. ’ I mention this,” continued the friar, “ that you may clearly understand on what principle it is I say, in reply to your question, that there is no word on record, either in the pages of Holy Writ or in the decrees of the Church, forbidding a trial of physical strength between two unarmed men, who contend without animosity, and for no object beyond that just specified. An angel wrestled with Jacob. The aim of the wrestler is to throw his adversary to the earth, in doing which he runs a greater risk of injuring him seriously than he would were he to strike him with his fist, in proof of which it may be observed that boxers are usually more injured by the falls they get in wrestling, when they close in the conflict, than by the blows they receive whilst boxing. My opinion, therefore, is, that you are at liberty to engage in this conflict.”

Whilst speaking, the friar kept his eyes cast down, but when he had finished his answer, he raised and fixed them on Willibald’s face so penetratingly, that with his second utterance, conveying as it did a most just reproach, Willibald felt himself quite confounded, but filled, at the same time, with veneration for one who afforded him such palpable evidence of his fidelity as a minister of God.

“ But you, my friend,” continued the friar, “ who have been so favoured by your Redeemer—who have so often been fed with his precious body and blood—who have so frequently,

and for so long a time past, tasted how sweet the Lord is—who are familiar with his mind, and ought to anticipate his wishes ——”

At this moment the speaker was interrupted, when he instantly withdrew, by the entrance of four men in merry mood, who came to say that the captain was willing that the fight should take place, and that Cajone was to be his opponent. To this choice Willibald firmly objected, alleging, that as they were on bad terms it would be impossible to engage in a combat of this kind without increasing the animosity that seemed already to be subsisting between them. This representation was received by some with laughter, whilst others, unable or unwilling to understand that it was a dictate of conscience, said he was afraid Cajone would give him no quarter. But finding that there would certainly be no fight if another champion were not provided, they went at once to make known Willibald's objection to Carmen, who readily selected another—a man Willibald had not yet seen, and who was greatly preferred as their representative by the others to Cajone.

CHAPTER XII.

How easy with the multitude to run,
But where to stop when once we do begin !
O, had I in that court much stronger been,
Or not so strong as first to enter in.

R. SOUTHWELL, S. J.

DURING the next week, Willibald's allowance of meat and wine was increased, he was also permitted to take exercise in a court-yard of the castle, for he had learnt by this time that it was a building of this description in which he was confined. How refreshing to him, after so long a confinement in a dark, damp dungeon, was the sight of the clear blue sky, the green grass, and of the light-reflecting walls that surrounded him ! Such was the buoyancy of his mind, that he would have felt just now perfectly happy, but for the anxiety he experienced on calling to mind the circumstances in which this indulgence had originated. “What am I about ?” said he, “that could have induced me to think of such a thing ?”

This thought would certainly never have been entertained for a moment, had the guidance of his mind in his boyhood been better adapted to his character, and more perspicuous.

Whilst at sea, his father had become so familiar with the exercise of sparring, that he was fully competent to teach his sons the rudiments of the "noble art." He was a man of close observation, and had made them very strong on one or two essential points. To be exceedingly quick, and yet never hurried—this was what he had principally inculcated: thus, speed with them being a familiar exercise, was never the occasion of confusion or a loss of "wind." In sparring for practice, he always made one strike continually and the other content himself with acting on the defensive. Thus, for amateurs, they were pretty expert with the gloves; but though, withal, active and strong, and ready to encounter pain, the activity of the nervous system exceeded so much the energy of the heart in both of them, that they were far from being framed to shine in the ring. This, however, was not regretted by Captain Cowley, inasmuch as his sole object in teaching his sons sparring, was to develope so much of physical as he judged sufficient for the demands of moral courage, should a trial come on this side.

Willibald could hardly bring himself to assume the fighter's attitude, and strike the air as a preparatory exercise, so wholly at variance with the habitual frame of his mind was the consideration which prompted him occasionally to do these things; but as the day approached which was fixed for the battle, he grew a little more practical in his notions, and especially called to mind his father's maxim, one, by the way, particularly applicable to a person of his make,—to work in the spirit of a conjurer, who performs his wonders by the union of extreme quickness with an equal degree of coolness. At his own urgent request, he was not allowed to see, beforehand, the man destined to be his antagonist. By this contrivance he hoped to exclude all feelings of an uncharitable nature in both parties. He also strove hard to purify his intention, so that his week of preparation was spent very much as if he were making a spiritual retreat. But the more he endeavoured to satisfy himself that there was a reason for acting as he proposed to do, the more perplexed and dissatisfied did he become; so that, eventually, he was compelled to desist from

reflection, and resolve to remain satisfied with this sole ground for fighting, viz., that, however unadvisedly, he had *engaged* to fight. There is no sin in fighting, therefore I should not be justified in breaking my promise to fight. With this reflection he remained during the last two days prepared for the conflict. It was a penance, he considered, which his weakness and imprudence had rendered him deserving of. It should be added, that, since his first, he had not been allowed another interview with the friar, who was known to be an inveterate mar-plot, and hated by the captain accordingly.



CHAPTER XIII.

With them I rest, a pris'ner in their jail,
Chain'd in the iron links of basest thrall;
Till grace vouchsafing captive soul to bail,
In wonted see degraded loves instal.

R. SOUTHWELL, S.J.

THE narratives of redeemed captives, and the statements of persons once engaged themselves in the predatory mode of gaining a livelihood, have possessed the public in Italy with a pretty accurate idea of the domestic life of the banditti that infested the Abbruzzi so numerous at the period of our narrative.

An open violation of the commandments of God, and a habit of "shirking" the performance of all their known duties as children of the Church, constitutes the sin amongst the peasantry of Italy, corresponding to the profession of infidelity in Catholic countries, which, like France, have suffered principally from the subtle inroads of an intellectual devil. An observation of very much the same tendency, and to which we have added nothing but the modifications, is made somewhere by Valery in his book on Italy, which we have not at hand to quote from. The Italians, then, sin as the Jews did. They do not formally disavow their obligations to their Heavenly Father—they do not deny his existence, because his presence is manifested to them in such a way that they cannot;—they are obliged, therefore, when they sin, to

blaspheme at the same time, or, which is equivalent, to insult the omniscience of the Almighty, by a mad endeavour to appease him by the performance of those duties which constitute only the supplementary part of religious worship, like Saul and his sacrifices without obedience. Thus the gang of robbers with whom Willibald Cowley was compelled to sojourn, kept, in a certain way, "the Month of Mary;" but their festivity was a mockery from beginning to end. They talked of "Mary" with a detestable familiarity, and pretended she was the patroness of robbers.

It was the first day of that month that Willibald was to fight—the approaching battle being one of the entertainments provided for the day which was to be spent convivially. All the *élite* of the band were present, and Carmen was also "at home" on this occasion. He had already signified his intention of backing Willibald himself: "Because," said he, "I know something of the English, and if I were not to back him, he would think he hadn't had fair play; and then the lesson would do him no good."

Nunzio Lupoti, the other combatant, was just Willibald's weight, but not quite so tall. On the whole, he had the more likely look about him of the two. There was an appearance of solidity in his frame, which was altogether wanting in Willibald's. He was quite an Italian in appearance, and was looked upon as a first-rate brigand. There was not, excepting Carmen, a better marksman in the band, and, excepting Carmen, he was, perhaps, the most skilled in the use of the stiletto. He was also a good sparrer, but quite unfitted by his want of temper and "head" for the ring. These deficiencies reduced his power to a level with Willibald's, whose chief defect was that he had too little of the "glutton" about him. There was a difference, also, in the nature of their courage; Willibald's partook more of the character of self-devotion, that of Lupoti depended, first, on the consciousness of great physical energy; secondly, on the spontaneous action of a strong animosity operating upon everything by which he found himself opposed.

Blue and cloudless, and full of the sun's dazzling light, was the sky which canopied the walls of the old castle on the first morning of the "merry" month. The lower part of these walls were Cyclopean, the other part was of a compara-

tively modern date. They were partly in ruins, but still so high, that a descent on the outer side would have been utterly impracticable ; nor was there, anywhere, a weak point by which an enemy could have entered, or a prisoner escaped. The repairs, which had been found necessary to make those parts habitable which were now occupied by the robbers, were of the rudest description ; but the warmth of the climate and the beauty of the situation formed more than an equivalent for the carpenters' and builders' aid. During the summer, each robber took up his night's quarters where fancy led him ; for, with the warm cloak he dragged with him, he could make himself comfortable wherever he could find a wall to afford shelter from the prevailing breeze, and a bit of mossy turf. Only two or three of those who were married had their wives with them ; but wives were not the only females who resided there. The licentious captain lived very much in the style of a Turkish grandee, and in addition to the four females who were doomed to a sinful intercourse with himself, twenty were dispersed among the band, who were compelled to cook, mend clothes, wash, clean up, garden, and wait upon the robbers. Thus the whole castle was pretty fully occupied. Dilapidated buildings, doomed to crumble to the earth during the long interval of disputed ownership, but which, in the mean time, serve as a place of residence to the families of multitudes of the outcasts of the neighbouring town, exhibit, in the internal arrangements, and in the contrivances for the exclusion of the air, which diversify the colouring of the outside, appearances very similar to those presented by this mountain rookery.

Carmen, surrounded by his men, all of whom were engaged in cleaning their firelocks, was enjoying the sense of his own power and independence with the help of one of those long, black, strong, but ill-flavoured cigars which the English smoker in Italy is compelled to content himself with when reduced to the necessity of dealing with a native tobacconist. In appearance he was by far the most conspicuous figure of the party assembled. Physically, he was in all respects of the dimensions of a champion. You could see at a glance that no two men there would be a match for him in a fistic encounter ; but his figure was still wholly un-English, *our* athletes having usually a larger proportion of bone than he

exhibited, immense muscles being the most striking feature in his proportions. The head, hands, and feet, too, were smaller: then, the soft brown skin, and the hair of raven hue, completed the distinguishing features of the breed to which he belonged. On the present occasion he was dressed in the garb usually adopted by the banditti of Italy, and which is familiar, through the instrumentality of the painter and engraver, to the eye of the inhabitants of this country as it is to the Italians themselves. What distinguished his figure from that of his companions, in addition to its size, was the breadth and fulness of the chest. There was also in his step that lightness and decision which is the usual accompaniment of the sense of vast physical power—something of the strut was also there denoting insolence of spirit. The face was unusually broad and swarthy, the moustaches and whiskers crisp and massy. An excessive readiness for action and a passion for conquest appeared in every gesture, whilst the observer might watch for ever, and not notice it, for one indicative of irresolution or impressibility of any kind. As if affected by the contractile power of the huge muscles of his shoulders and arms, the latter swung clear of the body, and formed an arch on each side, whilst with the thumbs turned inwards, the palms of the hands faced to the rear. A figure of this sort “shows” to little advantage in the dress of the modern European gentleman; still Carmen contrived, even in this dress, to give himself a very striking appearance, so that the generality of the young men at Naples, whether foreign or native, contrasted with him in the eyes of the opposite sex, who are generally impartial judges in these matters, as puny and rush-like, or stiff, gaunt, and overgrown. Whatever he said, as he stood surrounded by his followers, elicited an admiring laugh or an humble assent. None *talked* but he. The others only spoke in responsive monosyllables, excepting when information was asked of any of them demanding a more lengthened utterance. The feeling that subsisted between him and his men bore a strong resemblance to that which enables the skipper on board a merchantman to maintain his authority, or a Van Amburgh to keep his lions and tigers in order. Though the semblance was there, there was really no *fear* on the part of the subordinates. They were rather possessed by, than overawed by, the spirit of their

leader, whose Cæsar-like arrogance satisfied them that he was entitled by a right of mysterious origin to the influence he exerted over them; just in the same way that his sanctity induces pious persons to be very civil to a servant of God. The children of this world are even more devout than the children of God. Would that it were otherwise! But though productive of order, this feeling rendered the intercourse between Carmen and his men rather painful, so that it was a relief to both parties to be separated, so far, at least, as to obstruct the hearing of each other's remarks. It was, however, necessary sometimes, Carmen found, in order to keep alive the sense of his personal superiority, to become their boon companion. On these occasions there was a general outpouring of the mind and heart on the part of the men, and each vied with the other in the display he made of the grossness or the depravity of his taste. The witless joke, the brutish laugh, the hell-born anecdote, and the indecent song, then followed each other in quick succession, and Carmen helped along this muddy "flow of soul" with a liberality which showed him to be fit in every way to be their leader. At other times his demeanour was that of a disciplinarian, and he made his subjects feel that to be an outlaw, with reference to those powers that are ordained by God, is not always to enjoy the sense of freedom, but that, on the contrary, the tyranny of the devil is so great that, even on this side the grave, where it is rather his interest to ensnare than to show his authority, he cannot refrain from making his victims feel the power of his malice.

On the present occasion one of the men had just observed that it was curious no reward had been offered for information respecting the fate of Willibald.

"They haven't been put on his scent yet," replied Carmen, who had not yet imparted to a creature his real motive for detaining him. "By-and-by, when we've done with him, we'll give their noses a turn in the right direction." The prisoner had as yet been seen by none of the inhabitants of the castle excepting the few who took him his food. A considerable curiosity had begun to be entertained regarding his appearance by the whole party since the preparations for the battle had commenced; nor were the women the least curious on this occasion: for they, like the rest of their sex, were

conscious of their power as backers, and ever glad of an opportunity of exercising it.

At last the men who had been sent for Willibald returned with their charge. A week's training had not been sufficient to restore those appearances of health and vigour of which his long confinement had deprived him, and a feeling of shyness, of which he did not become conscious till he saw from afar the group of spectators, was another result of solitary confinement which concurred to give the British champion a rather unpromising look at this moment. Indeed, the predominant feeling excited by his appearance, at least among the kinder-hearted, was one of pity. Some of the women were filled with this feeling to such an extent as to find it difficult to refrain from tears. The captain understood everything at a glance, and immediately advanced, that by absorbing Willibald's attention, he might give him an opportunity of recovering from the rather discouraging effects of all this unexpected scrutiny.

It has been stated before, that Willibald's spirit was parasitical in its nature. It flew, therefore, into the haven now provided for it with the speed of lightning, and drew a fund of encouragement from the friendly bearing of the man of strength, who introduced himself as the party destined to act as his backer. Carmen also felt his co-operative instincts powerfully stirred by the heartiness of the acceptance with which his proffer was met. "He shall beat, if he dies for it," said he to himself, with the determination of a dog-fancier who is about to fight a favourite dog for a heavy wager. "Come," said he, shaking Willibald cordially by the hand, "you must do as the English always do—that is, conquer. I admired your patriotism; that is why I complied with your wish when my men informed me of your desire to avenge the honour of your countrymen, which they had impeached."

"Then," replied Willibald, recognising with unfeigned astonishment the horseman whose glance had disturbed him so much on a late occasion, "you are the captain of this band?"

The captain replied in the affirmative. Willibald immediately replied, suiting the action to the word in the military fashion, "I salute you as such: but," he continued, with a

good-humoured smile, "you will remember that it is only a *relative* honour I pay you."

The captain looked displeased; for so great was his pride, he could hardly bear to think that his calling was not recognised as a lawful one even by a Christian. The habitual desire of his heart was something like that which Antichrist will exhibit, viz., to have all men, good, bad, and indifferent, at his feet, admiring, approving, adoring him. He was not, however, so far given up to this insane ambition as to have lost the power, like a madman, of concealing and restraining it, nor was he so weak as to allow any existing state of mind that was pleasing to him to be stolen from him by every breath that whispered rebukingly to his inflamed and arrogant spirit.

Sparring owed its prominence among the athletic sports practised by the robbers, to the English tastes of their leader, who had become familiar with the use of the gloves, and learnt the rules observed in the ring by associating with the idle young men of our nation, naval, military, and "private," who are constantly sojourning at Rome and —.

Willibald was not a little surprised when he beheld the preparations for the fight—a ring, bottle-holders, &c.

"Now, then," said Carmen, "you shall say, How d'ye do? to your antagonist." He beckoned to Lupoti as he spoke, and in the next minute the friendly gaze of the frequent communicant, and the dark, fierce eye of the robber flashed a greeting. The sight of his opponent stirred up in a moment the combative propensity of the latter, and he began at once to peel.

"Don't be in such a hurry," said Carmen. "Get into the ring, man. Let us have everything in order!"

Lupoti could scarcely be prevented from flying upon Willibald like a wild beast before they had reached the place prepared for the battle. Carmen laughed at him heartily, but scarcely was that sufficient to moderate his impatience; indeed, it appeared to Willibald that, had he had a dagger at hand at that moment, he would have attempted the life of the captain himself.

"He is rather hot, you see," said the latter, "but never mind! England for ever! You'll show him some sport directly, I know!"

I see, thought Willibald at this moment, I must work in the spirit of a conjurer with this fellow ; he'll eat me else. A feeling of extraordinary nimbleness now began to creep through him ; at the same time, he never felt cooler in his life.

The excitement that prevailed among the lookers-on, as they beheld Willibald preparing for the set-to, was intense. They could hardly understand how one who appeared to be of so reflective a disposition, for this his countenance bespoke in a high degree, could bear to be placed in a position that the blind fury or instinctive obstinacy of the bulldog alone seems to fit a man for. It was in vain they looked for the trace of an expression suiting the circumstances in which he was placed. Intelligence seemed to be his all ; for there was no indication whatever of the state of his will : this could only be surmised from the deliberate way in which he took off his coat, waistcoat, and shirt, tying his neckerchief round his waist.

But scarcely had he finished this last action, when Lupoti rushed upon him. Like lightning Willibald bobbed under his fists, and got round him. Lupoti, in consequence, had well-nigh gone head-first over the ropes. In the mean time Willibald had assumed an attitude equally "pretty" and full of promise, as showing clearly that he knew what he was about. The other had also turned, and was pressing hurriedly upon his antagonist, who led him briskly round the ring without striking a blow in return for the many that were ineffectually aimed at him. This work continued during the space of five minutes, when the Italian seemed resolved to do something at last. Accordingly, he suddenly ceased to follow his man, and went back several yards. He then rushed at him with outstretched arms and head inclined, his design being to embrace, butt, and throw him with a violence that should quite disable him. Seeing this, Willibald stooped, and struck under with all his might at the face of the robber, just as the other reached him. Willibald was overturned, and the robber was uppermost in the fall ; but in taking his seat on the knee of his backer, the first round being now ended, it was seen very clearly that there was no longer any "speculation" in the right eye.

"Now," whispered Carmen to the thinking one, "you

have only got to give it him on the left peeper, and then you'll be able to do what you like with him. England for ever !”

Time being called, the sparring commenced again. Lupoti was growing cooler, but more savage. He seemed to wonder he could not do Willibald more mischief than he did, and it was clear he was angry with the latter because he was so unaccommodating. His design now was to close, and, if possible, to treat his entertainer to a little of what the minstrels of the Fancy call “ fibbing.” Observing his ferocity and free breathing, Willibald was determined now to throw away no opportunity that offered of enforcing his claims to a more flattering entreatment. The robber's Roman nose looked extremely tempting. The loss of a little blood, thought Willibald, will act as a sedative on his nerves. With that he aimed at it a telling blow, which, owing to the robber's stupidity, who touched his adversary's arm, in guarding a little too late, slid from the side of the nose into the left eye, and set one bleeding and the other blinking at one and the same time. But these “ molestations ” seemed to be quite insufficient for the object they were intended to realize. The robber still looked very fierce and as strong as a lion. As the fight advanced, the blood got smeared all over his face ; he then began to look more mischievous than ever to the thinking of Willibald, who almost fancied he could hear him say, “ Fe, fi, fo, fum ! I smell the blood of an Englishman,” &c. The recollection, too, of the exploits of Jack the Giant-killer came at this moment very cheerfully into his mind. If Jack, thought he, could so easily master giants, surely I shall be able to get the better of this man of moderate dimensions, though endowed with an insatiable thirst for blood. Willibald now began to get quite playful, and he was “ the favourite ” all to nothing.

After four rounds had been fought, Carmen said to Willibald, “ You must begin to punish him now. Let him tumble over the ropes again. Put him into a passion, and he'll soon be after you.”

Willibald followed these instructions with as much fidelity as if they had come from the lips of a spiritual director. He kept smacking the robber's cheek with the back of his open hand in such a way as to cause the spectators to laugh.

Nunzio quickly obeyed these orders, and commenced hitting right and left with terrific fury ; but Willibald's face still remained clean and intact. Every blow was stopped. At last Lupoti became so tired with his exertions, that he could scarcely hold up his arms. Willibald now dealt him two or three "teazers" on the eyes, nose, and mouth. What was the other to do? Again he backed, and again ran with the fury of a mad bull, open-armed, at Willibald, who, with matchless dexterity, put his head down as if he were going to turn over, which action occasioned the catastrophe adverted to by Carmen, for the robber went over him and over the ropes too, with such force that he dislocated his right arm in the fall, and was unable to appear at the scratch when "time" was called.

"England gains the day," said Carmen ; but in order to remove the feeling of rancour which he rather suspected would result to Lupoti from his defeat, he continued in a loud, imperious voice—

"Now, my men, take a lesson from this. The success of this stranger is wholly attributable to the obedience he showed to my directions whilst fighting. Nunzio, come hither, and give him your hand, and bear in mind that with me exclusively rests the odium of the stratagem by which you were disabled. It was I who beat you, not he—come, then!"

These words acted magically on the heart of the robber. He smiled, and his dark, fierce eye condescended to an expression of toleration, whilst he stretched forth his left hand to show that no ill-will on his part had been engendered by the fight.

"Now, then," continued the captain, "let the prisoner have some refreshment, and then take him back to his cell, and see that his shackles are well fixed, because you see he knows how to use his hands."

CHAPTER XIV.

That which he gave, oh ! 'twas a peerless gift !
 Both God and man he was, and both he gave ;
 He in his hand himself did truly lift,
 Far off they see whom in themselves they have.

Here to delight the wit, true wisdom is ;
 To woo the will of every good the choice ;
 For memory a mirror showing bliss,
 With all that can both sense and soul rejoice ;
 And if to all—all this it doth not bring,
 The fault is in the man—not in the thing.

R. SOUTHWELL, S. J.

THE protracted meditations of the captive priest, who was hurriedly introduced to the reader in the chapter preceding the last, had procured for him through the Divine goodness such an insight into the ways of our Heavenly Father, that Samuel could scarcely have understood the sins of Saul and David better than he the wickedness of Carmen Festa and the cowardly selfishness of Willibald. The latter he saw was endowed in a high degree with the capacity for enjoyment—that he was adapted for intimacy by the subtlety of his understanding and the activity and tenderness of his heart, and that for this very reason he was constantly exposed to the danger of obtaining his reward in this world by “*companying*” with it. The internal calls to a contemplative life which Willibald had had, he had guessed at the instant he saw him ; and as he full well understood that where such extraordinary manifestations of the love of our Redeemer are vouchsafed, without the smallest appearance of antecedent merit, it is because the salvation of the soul depends upon its correspondence, in some form or other, with such *attrails*, it was with no small anxiety that he beheld him yielding to the allurements of a spirit so inferior in dignity to that adapted to his own nature. As a false humility will induce women to marry men below them in point of social rank, by which conduct they degrade themselves both as ladies and as Christians, so the excessive natural meekness, which is frequently conspicuous in persons framed to “*see God*” in this life, constantly lays them open to the

influence of spirits which are designed for the occupation and the exercise of souls destined to serve in a more indirect and a less flattering manner, and which, in their regard, are to be viewed only as snares.

His intercessory prayers had not obtained for him that overwhelming sense of the divine goodness, as if the heart of his Redeemer were touching his own heart, which was the usual sign to him that he was favourably heard when he prayed for another, but had rather left him in a state of desolation; and the recollection of the words, *He that doeth the work of the Lord negligently shall perish by little and little*, occurring at the same time, gloomy fears took possession of his mind. He considered this a sign that prayer alone would be of little service to Willibald, and resolved accordingly to see him again as soon as possible. On applying, however, to Carmen for permission to visit him, he was met at once with a flat refusal, and a rude reprimand for asking.

Nothing so much irritated Carmen as the sight, under any circumstances, of pastoral zeal. This he viewed as nothing other than unmitigated conceit and officiousness, and, although nominally a Catholic, there breathed not in the whole world a single ecclesiastic who was regarded by him as other than an impudent meddler, aiming by religious talk at the acquisition of influence and power. He felt, of course, that the priest who could induce him to repent of his sins would dispossess him of the lawless sceptre which he wielded now so jealously, but he did not recollect that the best king France ever had, St. Louis, was attended wherever he went by two Dominican friars, who did for him what Samuel did for David, but never anything that has given cause to posterity to regret their influence. It is their morbid cupidity which leads so many people to make enemies, by their rash judgments, of all bankers, lawyers, and doctors. Once divested of this feeling, they become reasonable; they freely trust, and then they perceive that they are deeply indebted to these functionaries, as constituting the channel by which the protective power of the state flows round the tottering, the careless, or the infant steps of the individual subject. In like manner, it is the statesman's inordinate love of temporal power which causes him to entertain so bad an opinion of the clergy. The instant he ceases to be ambitious and tyrannical, his eyes are

opened, and he thanks the Almighty for providing for him in the clergy teachers of the difficult art of exercising temporal power without detriment to his hopes of a happy hereafter ; but rather in a way that will profit both himself and his neighbour in this world as well as in the next. Carmen had a suspicion that the friar wished to put Willibald on his guard against the seductive example and conversation of the robbers, and so he was determined not to allow another interview to take place. The friar now understood better than ever the perilous nature of Willibald's situation.

That the reader may have the best means of judging of the baseness of Willibald's conduct in resisting his vocation, let us contrast it with that of St. Laurence Justinian, beautifully described by Alban Butler in his "Lives of the Saints." "In the nineteenth year of his age he was called by God to consecrate himself in a special manner to his service. He seemed one day to see in a vision the Eternal Wisdom in the disguise and habit of a damsel, shining brighter than the sun, and to hear from her the following words: 'Why seekest thou rest to thy mind out of thyself, sometimes in this object and sometimes in that? What thou desirest is to be found only in me, who am the wisdom of God. By taking me for thy spouse and thy portion, thou shalt be possessed of its inestimable treasure.' That instant he found his soul so pierced with the charms, incomparable honour, and advantages of this invitation of divine grace, that he felt himself inflamed with new ardour to give himself up entirely to the search of the holy knowledge and love of God." An invitation as unequivocal, though in a form less visionary, had Willibald received to turn from the toys by which he was surrounded at the Villa Algorouki, and from the anticipated delights of a rambling life, to be entered on sooner or later ; but following the truant instinct that formed one of the strongest tendencies of his nature, instead of springing up to obey at once the heavenly summons, he had rather striven to persuade himself that he was deceived in supposing he had been thus spoken to by the voice of God. These remarks may serve to assist in the formation of a correct estimate of the perilousness of Willibald's present position, as they discover the true origin of the succession of incidents by which he had been pushed into the den of thieves, and

provoked into the gladiatorial display which we have just described. He that goeth about seeking whom he may devour, had demanded and obtained as his due the use of so much of Willibald's heart as Willibald had refused to yield up to the influence of divine grace. We shall see now how the devil employs, and how the old friar by his prayers and penances undermines, his power.

CHAPTER XV.

A sorry wight, the object of disgrace,
 A monument of fear, the map of shame,
 The mirror of mishap, the stain of place ;
 The scorn of time, the infamy of fame ;
 An excrement of earth, to heaven most hateful,
 To man injurious, to God ungrateful.

R. SOUTHWELL, S. J.

CARMEN, as we have before stated, had had Willibald seized, in the first instance, merely with the view of hindering him from becoming his rival in the affections of Sophia Butwell. He now began to rejoice on another account, that the young Englishman was among the number of his dependents. Willibald, with his excellent education, his admirable abilities, and his familiarity with the taste and manners of English "gentlefolks," was quite a *public* to Carmen ; moreover, the longing for praise and admiration, which is usually excited in us by the presence of a being in whom the image of God shines forth more brilliantly than in ourselves, or those by whom we are usually surrounded, had gradually riveted his thoughts to Willibald. But the love of admiration in the wicked has in it a large admixture of rapacity, like the mendicinity of a footpad, so that he whose favour is courted by them is exposed to a risk similar to the peril you are said to be in when a tiger licks your hand ; for if you withdraw it, he will quarrel with you, and if you allow him to continue licking, he will soon taste your blood and be seized with an uncontrollable desire to make a meal of you.

Carmen also designed employing Willibald as a teacher of

English ; and it was whilst receiving instructions from him that he took occasion to exhibit, in this new magnifying mirror, every portion of his own history and character which he loved to have admired. But though Willibald was naturally apt to carry politeness to a fault, his honesty always had the upper hand, and Carmen soon had the mortification of perceiving that the principles of his preceptor prevented the expression of his natural sentiments, and converted him, whose applause alone was coveted by the pupil, into a mentor. Many men situated as he was, in reference to his lecturer, would have been content with simply turning aside in disgust, and avoiding his society for the future ; but, accustomed to have his own way in all things, and mistaking Willibald's gentleness for instability, the thought crossed him that nothing would be easier, with a little patience, than to corrupt a heart the purity of which caused it to shrink from an act of devotion to a being so thoroughly godless as himself.

Carmen was reputedly a Christian, because whilst despising the names of Christ, Luther, and Voltaire equally, he despised too much the followers of the two latter to speak to any of their way of thinking, in accordance with any of their ideas regarding the former. It would, perhaps, be speaking more accurately to say, that he was an utter stranger to all abstract reasoning, and belonged to that class of wicked ones of whom St. Paul said, that their God is their belly. He was a Hercules—a know-nothing : saying, “ Call me a Catholic ; call me anything you will ; only resist me not. I am what I am, and I will possess and destroy according to my fancy—destroying those that I cannot possess.”

Carmen had had several interviews with Willibald, and had sounded him well before he gave orders, that in future the prisoner's meals should be taken to him by a female whom he named. This was a young woman whom he had seduced himself, and who had been a great favourite. The sprightliness of her mind, with an extraordinary talent for mimicry, had gradually operated on his pride in a way (not contemplated by her, for she had ever been careful not to give utterance to anything betraying the dawn of a feeling of coolness towards himself) which had made her distasteful to him ; still he continued good friends with her, and she was nothing disturbed at observing this cessation of amorous affection,

because her ambition was rather to surpass all around her by the liveliness of her sallies in conversation, and in the dauntless vivacity of her mind, than to be the captain's favourite mistress.

Had Priscilla been more devout, she would never have fallen into Carmen's hands. She was one of those who needed the succours of religion excessively, in order to resist such temptations as those which had triumphed over her virtue in this instance. The road to her heart lay through the imagination, so that she was always in danger of being taken by *strangers*. Had it not been for the vigour of her understanding, she would have resembled the heroine of the ballad, "On the Banks of Allen Water;" but being witty and satirical, she was never in danger of allowing a disappointed affection to make a fool of her, by destroying the peace of her mind; at the same time, as no amount of talent can alone enable a person to resist the arts of seduction, so not having grace sufficient for the encounter, she was compelled to yield consent to the persevering entreaties which expressed the vehemence of Carmen's brutal love.

It was just observed, that no amount of *talent* will enable a person to resist effectually the arts of seduction. It is a different thing with opposing *passions*. These are frequently sufficient, and more than sufficient, for the total defeat of enemies of this kind. Priscilla had not anything more than the germs of such passions within her; that is why she so much needed *supernatural* succours. And for the same reason, when seduced, she remained in a state of unconcern respecting the degradation which had befallen her, and lived on as merrily as if nothing had happened. There was no voice within the walls of Carmen's castle which, to a stranger's ear, would have conveyed a more disheartening idea of the moral condition of the inmates of that retreat than hers—high, saucy, ironical, and continuous. To every one there, excepting Carmen, she was provokingly pert and personal. But her youth, prettiness, and merriment made her presence acceptable wherever she came, and she herself, though her outward bearing was that of a person who cared for the esteem of none, was by far too deeply in love with popularity ever to commit herself so far as to wound deeply the feelings of any one.

Before she was sent to Willibald, Carmen had spoken to her. Thus he spoke, and thus she answered.

"You are getting tired of me, Priscilla, I can see."

"I think it is time."

"Still you are prepared to do me a friendly turn? I want you to try and take the starch out of that Englishman. You understand me?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, don't you think you could tackle him?"

"At least I can try."

"You can do what you like with him—marry him, even, if you feel inclined."

"I shall turn him round till he is dying of giddiness before I do that, to see how much stability there is in him; for, as I shall have come to a standstill myself when I marry, I shall take care that the man I marry has quite done with gadding about."

This was said with a significant glance at the captain, who, knowing her weak point, was prepared with an answer which admirably served his present purpose.

"The truth is," said he, in a confidential tone, "he would be useful to me in a variety of ways, if it were not for his piety. I have done all I can to make him change his tune, but without the least effect. In fact, my efforts to improve his dispositions have had an opposite effect; they have turned him into a preacher. This is why I wish you to pay him a visit. You have tact for anything of this sort. I don't know a creature who has, in her whole being, a quarter so much of searching fascination as you have in your little finger."

Priscilla looked mightily pleased. Their conversation was interrupted at this moment by the approach of a man who had just returned with ammunition and provisions from —.

"You will take him his food and look after him in future," continued Carmen, as she withdrew, and then he turned to the messenger.

The latter was dressed like a chasseur, for in — he enacted the part of servant to El Conde de Valdonsella. Being fatigued with his journey, he spoke little, and handed a letter, directed in an English lady's hand, to the captain

without uttering a word. Carmen, as he eyed the address, indulged in a hearty laugh, and seemed to enjoy amazingly this evidence of complete success that had attended, hitherto, the deception he was practising on the family of Sir Francis Butwell. The letter he had just received was from Sophia. It ran as follows :—

“DEAREST ALPHONSO !—It is most fortunate you understand English so well ; for, as I have so much difficulty in describing what I feel, even in my native language, I am afraid I should not have been able to find more words in Italian than would have sufficed to declare that I could say nothing, had it been necessary for me to write in that language. You could not have stronger evidence of the sincerity of my affection than these expressions, coming from one who has all her life been famous for her hatred of foreigners, and her unsusceptibility. I assure you I am quite astonished myself at the sight of them, and, perhaps, if I did not despatch the letter containing them immediately, my English pride would not allow me to send it. In fact, I know myself so well, that I am certain it would not. You see, then, by this confession, that the only rival you have in my heart is my pride ; which state of things, I apprehend, you will be nothing loth to tolerate, inasmuch as it forms a continued living evidence of the power exerted on me by your attachment.

“This letter is written without the knowledge of papa and mamma : their prejudices will give way, I doubt not, by degrees ; but at present they continue to evince the strongest disapprobation of your suit. They *will* have it that your attachment to the Catholic religion is much deeper than it seems. They even go so far as to say they doubt not, that if the truth were known, there is not a bishop in — who is not privy to the whole thing, and rubbing his hands in an ecstasy at the prospect of the speedy conversion of us all. And when I object to this—that I have ascertained through some Catholic friends we have here that you are not known to any of the bishops, they tell me that my informants are not so green as I,—that, in fact, Catholics are so wholly and entirely of one mind in their passion for propagating their religion, that if I were to spend twenty years

in endeavouring to get at the truth in this matter, I should not succeed. When I again reiterate that it is well known that the majority of the enlightened inhabitants of Italy are only what are called *nominal* Catholics, and that when I have mentioned things you have said to me about the Catholic religion to some bigoted Catholics,—the Cowleys, for instance,—they all declare you can only be what is called a nominal Catholic. *Nominal* Catholic! say they; why, they are the worst kind of Catholics you can have anything to do with; Guy Fawkes was a *nominal* Catholic, Henry IV. of France was a *nominal* Catholic, Louis XIV. was a *nominal* Catholic. The religion of nominal Catholics consists only in the negation of Protestantism, and its practice consists only in hating and persecuting us. So that nothing will satisfy them. Then, again, they have an equal horror of scepticism. I have sometimes ventured to advert to the possibility of your ultimately seeing fit to embrace Protestantism; but even then they only said they should not think you sincere,—that scarcely any converts from Catholicism are,—that it is like Judaism in that respect, which seems to stick so fast to the mind that has been reared in the belief of it, that its traces cannot be washed out by the same waters that are able to remove the stain of original sin. In short, at present, there appears to be no end to the string of objections I draw out of them every time I allude to your wishes regarding myself. I hope you will come again on Tuesday, for the charms of Italy have all crept into so narrow a compass of late, that, without the help of a native expositor, I hunt for them in vain.

“Believe me, ever most affectionately yours,

“SOPHIA.”

The contemplation of the difficulty adverted to in this manœuvring epistle had the effect of developing a little malice into the compound of feelings that had cast Carmen into the rank of Miss Butwell’s admirers. The tyrant had begun to be aroused in him, and, quick and bright as a flash of lightning, came the next thought,—rather a wild one it must be admitted,—that, by the help of Priscilla’s seductive influences, Willibald might be at last converted into a tool, to give such an account of his religion and his character, as

should completely remove from the minds of the parents the impressions that constituted the only hinderance to the realization of their daughter's wishes.

CHAPTER XVI.

It has been already intimated that the modesty, courage, and address exhibited by the English champion in the late battle had rendered him on the spot a universal favourite. They had particularly recommended him to the fancy of the females. Priscilla, who was best able to appreciate the moral and intellectual elements which so strikingly distinguished his appearance from those of Carmen and his men, had been particularly taken, and had carefully concealed from every creature near her the change in his favour in the current of her sympathies, hitherto undividedly the possession of Carmen, which had commenced with her first view of his person. It was, therefore, with a feeling of tremulous delight that she took him his dinner, according to Carmen's orders, the first time; but after she had repeated this action eight or ten times, she seemed still as far off as ever from being sufficiently well acquainted with him to see any chance of producing the favourable impression contemplated. She was afraid to speak herself, and Willibald never spoke to her—he never even looked at her, until fourteen days had elapsed. He then said, in a tone which left every sense of the hearer, except that of hearing, in a state of lethargy,—

“How came you to be in this place?”

This question was put in such a way that Priscilla afterwards declared she could not, for anything, have withheld an answer which at once laid bare the degradation which had brought and detained her where she was.

“Have you no wish,” continued Willibald, “to escape from it?”

“Yes,” replied Priscilla, “if I could have you for my companion.”

“Well,” replied the other, very coolly, “if you will co-

operate, I'll see if something can't be done. Let us at once begin a novena to Our Blessed Lady, with a view to obtaining such succours as shall enable us to escape from this hell upon earth."

Priscilla found herself quite disenchanted by these words, and for a time their effect was quite repulsive. It was to her as if some person was endeavouring to make her virtuous against her will. If, thought she, hesitating to reply, I give myself to the guidance of this man, I shall soon be obliged to bid adieu to all pleasure. It is quite clear that he is a man of God, and that I shall never be able to make head or tail of him. For awhile she thought of flying from him and becoming an open enemy, for her self-love was somewhat wounded by the extraordinary ease with which he had foiled her attempt, or contemplated attempt, on his virtue. His admonitory voice had also associated him in her mind with the pastor, who had so often in times past striven to make her sensible of the danger she was exposed to by a frivolous conversation with the world that surrounded her in her native town, and whom, on that account, she had learned gradually to hate. Whilst she yet remained undecided, Willibald added, in a remarkably familiar tone, which seemed to Priscilla to unite itself to her own voice—

"The prayers shall be one *Pater*, one *Ave*, and one *Gloria*. Come, that won't be much: come—what is your name?"

"Priscilla."

"Come, Priscilla."

Priscilla smiled, and added in a tone which was full of promise to Willibald's ear, "Very well, I'll say them."

The expression of her face, as she said this, was so extremely engaging, that Priscilla was nearly doing that by yielding which she had wholly failed to effect by the deliberate employment of her powers of fascination. At the same time, it seemed to Willibald, whilst she spoke, as if her soul entered his and sat down there, which sensation obliged him to pray that he might quickly be delivered from the burthen, as one that threatened to weigh him to the earth, and fix him there by its weight. How fortunate it was for both these young persons that Priscilla at this moment looked upon Willibald as a being incapable of harbouring a thought con-

nected with the impure love she had been endeavouring during the last three weeks to excite in him!

It is in this way that the King of Heaven helps and preserves those whom he employs to snatch the naked and the abandoned from the embraces of Satan. Willibald was distressed, but soon the recollection of the words of our Redeemer to the Apostle of the Gentiles, when he, too, groaned in the midst of a similar conflict—*My grace is sufficient for thee*—quite restored his confidence, and imparted to his whole soul a feeling of adamant stability.

CHAPTER XVII.

This brought him from the ranks of heavenly quires
 Into the vale of tears and curséd soil;
 From flowers of grace into a world of briars;
 From life to death, from bliss to baleful toil,
 This made him wander in our pilgrim weed,
 And taste our torments to relieve our need.

R. SOUTHWELL, S. J.

WHEN Priscilla returned to the society of her associates above, after the interview just described, she looked so bright and happy that they all remarked it, and attributing it to the success which had at length crowned her efforts to enslave the soul of the prisoner, they began making observations of a character very much too gross for repetition here. Priscilla saw at once what her cue should be under these circumstances, and laughed and looked "unutterable things:" for she felt at once that if the true nature of her compact with Willibald were to "get wind," they would be poniarded without mercy. Carmen was absent at this time, and several of the garrison were also abroad, so that the precincts of the old castle were comparatively silent, and Priscilla had no difficulty in escaping from time to time from the noisy circle she usually frequented to reflect undisturbed on the change of life she contemplated.

In her earliest youth nature had once spoken to her heart enchantingly, but the excessive activity of her mind had gradually closed the bodily eye to all outward objects that

were not intelligent; birds, beasts, fishes, trees, and mountains had long ceased to exist for her, so exclusively *social* had her tastes become. But now, wishing to raise her thoughts above the social circle, the natural objects around her, with their innocent and "incense-breathing" eloquence, came most opportunely to her aid. They spoke most refreshingly to her spirit, and even like the more intimate language of the "spirit that breatheth where it listeth"—the language that enraptures the souls of the saints—they acted upon her as the immediate cause of aspirations such as she had never made before in her whole life.

Wonder at the mercies of thy Lord, Priscilla, a voice seemed to say, for He desires to possess that heart still which has so long been enslaved to sin of the deepest dye! Priscilla longed to be in a place where she might prostrate herself in acknowledgment of her own vileness, misery, and instability, without the chance of an interruption. In search of this she wandered one day into a region her foot had never trod before, though she had lived upwards of two years within the castle walls. The only visible approach to it was through the upper part of an arched window, the lower part of which was buried in earth, stones, and rubbish. This heap sloped down into the inclosure, the mossy lap of which was strewn with human bones. The instant her eye fell on these bones, Priscilla remembered having heard that there was such a place, but that it was "haunted," pestiferous, and full of vipers. This recollection at any other time might have caused a hurried retreat; but it operated in an opposite way on the present occasion. The desertion, silence, and desolation of the place so entirely suited her present frame of mind, that she advanced with joy. In doing so she came suddenly in view of an object which the branches of a silver-birch had hitherto concealed. This was the figure of the old friar, in the attitude of prayer, and suspended in the air about twenty feet above the ground.

A feeling of amazement, quickly followed by one of profound reverence, took possession of the heart of the beholder as she stood gazing on the wonderful sight. Being herself on a declivity, she was nearly on a level with the friar, and, as he was not far distant, she could see most distinctly the expression of his face. Every feature was as still and im-

movable as marble, and, save that the skirts of the habit were stirred by the passing breeze, there was no appearance indicative of its subjection in the usual way to the laws of nature in this enraptured figure; so that it appeared to Priscilla as if it had been for ever there, and would remain there for all eternity. Time and all that is transient seemed to have nothing to do with that adorer of the Eternal. His soul seemed to have gone out of his revering eyes into the presence of those who cry without ceasing, "Holy!" and what reason had Priscilla to expect that that soul would ever return—that those eyes would ever be released from their present happy occupation? As she still stood gazing, her limbs began to tremble, and she was glad to sit down. A joy indescribably sweet chained her to the spot for several hours, during which the figure and the face of the friar remained stiller than death. "I see," thought Priscilla, "that he beholds the Creator of the world—that he loves, reveres, admires, and fears, as all men should, the Lord our God:" and whilst she thus spoke, she tremulously hoped that her own heart would soon be raised aloft from the earth, and fixed for ever on its proper object.

She had remained in silent admiration of the old Franciscan for nearly half a day, when the evening's decline and the frequent utterance of her own name by her female companions—who, wondering at her long absence, were amusing themselves with hunting for her—made her sensible that she must retire. Respectfully bowing to the still motionless figure which had riveted her attention with such marvellous power so long, she reluctantly turned and scrambled out of the little wilderness which had now become to her charming as the spot of which the holy patriarch Jacob said, on waking from his dream: "How terrible is this place! This is no other but the house of God and the gate of heaven."

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON his return to the castle, Priscilla thought Carmen looked particularly moody and ill-tempered. He did not, as she expected, once inquire what success she had had during his absence. Two whole days had elapsed before the humour for a conversation of this kind discovered itself. Priscilla saw that he was meditating mischief, and she thought she could understand in what direction his malevolence was preparing to discharge itself, when he called her to his own quarters.

He sat on the edge of his bedstead, with his back to the window. The light fell beyond, on a wall of stone, boarded to within five feet from the ground with planks of fir. A small bookcase occupied the corner of the room, which was to Carmen's right; and near it, on a table, lay an open writing-desk, the witness of many a forgery and letter of intimidation. At all times is a strange writing-desk savouring of recent use a repulsive object (our own we are too apt to view with a vile complacency); but the writing-desk of the brigand Carmen seemed to be literally reeking with the wickedness which was so often prepared upon its dingy baize. So, however, was it in perfect keeping with the rest of the contents of the murderer's den; with a bureau that looked ready to burst with the fermentation of ill-gotten treasure; with the arms of every kind and description wherewith the walls were hung; with the heaps of spurs, saddles, bridles, whips, cloaks, coats, hats, masks, and boots; but above all, with the carefully-executed coloured French lithographs, hanging in various parts of the room, the subjects of which were so frightfully obscene that most men would have staggered at the sight of them, and felt as many students do the first time they enter a dissecting-room.

Priscilla, during the conversation we are about to record, stood nearly opposite the window, and, according to his bidding, so near to him that her dress touched his knees. She, though angelic in appearance compared to him, did not look at all like a saint; still you discerned the upward

tendency of the spirit which had played so pusillanimous a part in its conflict with the flesh hitherto, and loved it the more because its difficulties excited compassion. It was not till she had stood before Carmen upwards of a minute, that he suddenly turned his dark imperious eyes upon her. In an instant he saw the change which had taken place in her sentiments towards himself, and although before he had professed a desire that she should rid herself of all amorous affection for himself, a pang of jealousy shot through his heart as he perceived that in her eyes he was now no longer an object of admiration or of respect. Priscilla did not intend to be thus seen through at once; but it is almost impossible, when the heart has recovered its liberty, to prevent a corresponding change from taking place in the expression of the face.

"Well," said Carmen, sullenly, "what have you done?"

"I can make nothing of him," replied Priscilla, gaily; "he is the hardest-hearted man I ever met."

"Are you sure he understood you?"

"I went as far as I dared."

"That is, you have been endeavouring to *recommend yourself*, not to seduce him."

"You said I might marry him if I liked."

"Yes; but what did that mean?" Here the robber again eyed Priscilla, till it appeared to her as if his glance were palpable. It was with a rage almost devilish in its nature that he now first apprehended the fact that she was shrinking from his service, and that her very fears threatened speedily to become an insurmountable impediment to the controlling action of his own will upon her. At this juncture he saw plainly enough that it would be bad policy on his part to use threats, yet such was the ferocity of his nature that he could not help plunging at once into a coercive course in her regard; he condescended, however, to begin with a little remonstrance, saying—

"You are a greater fool than I took you for."

An expression of calm resignation now began to spread over Priscilla's face, as he spoke thus; for, observing the turn Carmen's thoughts were taking, she had already begun secretly to recommend herself to the protection of the Almighty. This expression was instantly noticed by Carmen,

who, mistaking it for a return of love for himself, was suddenly seized with an amorous emotion. Thinking at the same time that Priscilla had been playing him a lover's trick by assuming the air which had proved so offensive, he seized her hand, and said, "What a mine it is!" then would have followed a salutation, had not Priscilla turned away her head and timidly said—

"No; I have sinned enough."

"If you say so," replied the other, as he yielded to the impulse of his returning rage, "I will put the finishing stroke to your good resolution at once. What are you here for, you chattering noodle, but to serve me? Now," continued he, tapping the sheath of his stiletto and grinning conceitedly, "if you do not mend your manners before to-morrow evening, and come to me and tell me yourself that you repent and are again ready to do my will, I'll file you at once for a settled account; and now budge!"

Priscilla withdrew in silence. Though not a person of strong nerves, and possessing naturally very little power or turn for resistance, she was so entirely detached from the influences of his spirit by these menaces, that far from feeling alarmed on the present occasion, she began to think of anything rather than yielding in the manner specified by him.

Ingenious at all times, she felt at this moment as if her inventive faculties would enable her to effect her escape from the hands that now detained her, even were they endued with the quality of ubiquity. She scanned in thought every circumstance that favoured the designs of the enemy, and was surprised to find only one link in the chain favourable to herself—and this, the very one she had the least inclination to meddle with. It consisted in the heart of Nunzio Lupoti, whose occasional whispers of love had ever excited in her feelings of vehement disgust, inasmuch as she had a natural antipathy to anything like deceit and treachery; in fact, nothing but the disinclination to become the means of his instant destruction had prevented her long ago from mentioning to Carmen his attempts on her meritless fidelity. However, by reflecting that by turning this fancy of his to a good account she should be doing harm to no one, and might remove herself from the immediate occasion of the death of

the body or that of the soul, she resolved to make a tool of the robber in the following manner.

A recital of the conversation which took place between her and him by moonlight, in an unfrequented part of the ruin, would yield so little of healthy entertainment, that the result only shall be stated here. Nunzio that very night stole the key of the only entrance to the castle from Carmen's vest, as it lay tenantless whilst its owner slept, and departed with Priscilla.

It was not till the end of the day following that Carmen could be persuaded of the truth of the irritating report that Lupoti and Priscilla had left the castle together. Outwardly, he remained calm, and even smiled occasionally; but purposes of the most revengeful nature were forming in his breast the while. Three men were despatched in three different directions, with a notice to the head man in each of those localities, informing him of Lupoti's escape, and ordering his arrest or execution on the spot, should circumstances admit or require proceedings of this summary nature. It may be as well to finish Lupoti's history here at once. He was tracked, slain, brought home, and laid at the feet of Carmen by Diego Caprioli, three days after his disappearance. But of Priscilla, the only tidings brought were, that she was not in Lupoti's company when he was slain.

CHAPTER XIX.

A poor desire I have to mend my ill;
I should—I would—but dare not say, I will.

R. SOUTHWELL, S. J.

ATTRIBUTING the change which had taken place in Priscilla to her intercourse with Willibald, Carmen was very far from feeling towards the latter in the way he pretended when he visited him in his prison the day after her escape had become known to him.

"You have never guessed," said he, "why you were brought hither, and I am not going to tell you now; but this

I will confess, that I have gradually come to value you on your own account, and that I would not under any consideration lose you, or, by keeping you too close a prisoner here, shorten your days, or make your life unbearably miserable. But, *more than this*—I will give you your liberty very shortly if you will consent to play the part of my intimate friend to Sir Francis Butwell, and assure him that you are quite certain I am sincere in my professions of disapprobation of the doctrine and discipline of the Catholic Church, and have long been talking of becoming a Protestant.”

“That would be a lie,” replied Willibald.

“Don’t talk to me of lies,” answered the other; “I don’t know what they are. But now—what say you?”

“I would not to save my life enter into such a compact.”

“What is in you, man,” replied Carmen, “that with so clear a head you are so unreasonable? It is a real wonder to me that one, with the pluck and gumption you sometimes seem to possess, can suffer himself to be made a fool of to the end of his days by maxims learnt in the nursery from women and their deceivers. Men of the right stamp soon tear away this cobweb-work, and walk the earth as the lords of the creation. It is true that the number of these is small, and that is why their reign is not yet fully established. They are not, as they may appear at present, tyrants, since all their labours tend to the overthrow of an empire which derives its strength from the simplicity of the multitude. Few are experimentally acquainted with the depth and capacity of their own spirits. If they would only throw open their hearts to the spirit of liberty, they would find themselves rejoicing in the sense of a power altogether unlimited. It is to few I would talk thus, but in you, my friend, I discern that which entitles you to the confidence of the initiated in this science: in short, I know no creature to whom I have ever said so much. If you will listen to me, I will open your eyes, and make a wise one of you. Look upon the earth as your foot-stool, and all men as your rebellious subjects; then we will reign together, or at least we will labour together for the firm establishment of our reign. If you talk of a God, I answer, reign for the Creator, and be the personification on earth of His supreme power. By this means, you will force men to be religious by establishing your own power.”

To this Willibald quietly replied,—

“ You cannot serve God in any other way than that prescribed by Him ; and the way prescribed by Him differs widely from that proposed by you. Do you believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and God himself ? ”

“ I do.”

“ But, then, why not follow his doctrine ? ”

“ Because I believe that you and I are as much the sons of God, and as much God, as he was ; and, for the rest, I will not follow his doctrine, because I believe it to be founded in ignorance of man’s true vocation.”

“ Well,” replied Willibald, “ I profess myself his follower, and, as such, I must declare to you that your language now is the very same as that for which Lucifer was cast headlong into hell.”

Scarcely had these words left the speaker’s lips when Carmen seized him by the throat.

“ I am vastly inclined,” said he, “ to destroy you at once ; but it will be a more fitting punishment for one who pretends to despise power, if he be first compelled to *feel* it—if he be taught to *serve*. What I just now asked you to do as a favour, that, I now tell you, you *shall* do. If you refuse, I shall have your hands tied, and give you a taste of the scourge : again, if, being abroad, you should attempt to play me false, I will never rest till I know you are no more. You may go whither you will, but you will never be able to escape the hand engaged to satisfy my wrath : my own death will not secure you from a bloody end, for I shall bequeath this quarrel to my men, those especially who I know will religiously fulfil its obligations.”

Willibald smiled as he heard these words, and said—

“ What do you imagine yourself to be ? Surely you know that the devil himself cannot injure a hair of the head of any human being without the permission of God. Well,” he continued, in reply to the ferocious sneer that his words had brought to the features of his enemy, “ begin now, and still I shall know that it is in the providence of God that I suffer, and that he allows this to happen to me because he wishes, in his goodness, to destroy in me something that makes me an offence to him.”

Carmen at this moment withdrew in silence. Willibald,

in the mean time, fell on his knees, and heartily prayed for strength to enable him to remain true to the dictates of his conscience during the ordeal to which he conceived he was about to be subjected. He raised his heart as high as he could to his Redeemer, and endeavoured to leave it fixed on him in an act of adoration.

In another minute Carmen returned, bringing with him two men. Cajone was one of them. Without uttering a word, they handcuffed him, and then, attaching his arms to a large iron ring in the floor, they stripped off his clothes.

Carmen then struck him with the scourge once.

"Now," said he, "to begin with, you shall have twenty of these, first."

Smarting to the inmost recesses of his heart, Willibald still resolved to submit in patience to the lashes that were to follow. Never before had he been so sensible of the utility of prayer as he was on this occasion. He felt that so long as he continued to direct his thoughts towards God, and to cling with his spirit to him, he should be able to bear any amount of bodily pain; but that should he once turn to compassionate his own flesh, and to upbraid his persecutors, the body and they would soon have it all their own way. Thus he received, without a sign of distress, nineteen more lashes. The blood was now trickling down his back, and the flesh quivering with pain: a profuse perspiration had overspread his face, and tears were trickling down his cheeks, but every feature beamed with charity and clemency as he turned to answer Carmen's question—Did he persist in the determination which had drawn upon him the stripes he had just received?

"I must," said he, "if you are still determined to give them; but, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I beseech you not to inflict more upon me, for I feel that every blow you give me strikes his heart. Remember, Carmen Festa, the fate of the Jews, those who crucified our Lord. All that you give me, it is true, I deserve, but not for obeying Christ, therefore my blood still rests upon you, because it is not my sins you punish, but my justice, which is divine."

"The man is mad surely. He tells me I am accursed, because I say I am as much a——"

The speaker checked himself, as he was extremely careful

to conceal from his comrades the more subtle acts of his Luciferian spirit.

"What do you mean?" said he, by calling your justice divine?"

"I mean," replied Willibald, but to be interrupted—

"To call your judge to account," interposed the other; "to make it appear that you know more of the Divinity than I do. Come, perhaps another dozen or two will restore you to your senses, and teach you in which direction to look for mercy."

"The scourge was now applied again with increased vigour. Willibald only hoped that the life of the flesh would soon be destroyed by it; but Carmen took good care not to inflict a single lash beyond the number he thought could be borne; though the reply to his next interrogation was sufficiently exasperating.

"I assure you," said Willibald, "the power you exert over me is in effect no power at all. I do not say this to exasperate you, but merely to deter you from incurring further guilt by continuing to scourge me."

Carmen smiled, and for the first time he looked thoroughly disconcerted by the inflexible firmness of his victim. But still he seemed determined to continue the siege. He told Willibald he should visit him again in the course of the day, and then withdrew, resolving next to employ another species of torture.

Willibald now began to put on his clothes. He felt at that moment like one immersed in a sea of troubles; yet now first he began to feel as if the fire of divine love were being gradually kindled within him. Thus, comparing the condition of his soul to a material object, it may be said that he resembled a pile of green wood intermixed with some in a more combustible state, with a small flame so buried in the midst as yet to be invisible from without, though discovering its presence by the stream of smoke ascending from the top.

Carmen in the mean time, reflecting on the consequences of having such a man as Willibald to undermine, by his example, his own influence on the minds of his followers, should he continue unchanged, resolved, if unsuccessful in his next attempt to subdue him, to let him depart, on condition that he would promise never to inform against him.

During the night succeeding his passive conflict, the prisoner reflected a good deal on his past life, with the view of ascertaining, if possible, what was the particular sin or fault he was now suffering for.

As he sat chilly and feverish, and agonizing from the smarting of his wounds, he readily parted at that moment with that love of running after his own fancies, which he soon recognised as one of his most crying weaknesses. With the eyes of his soul he looked out of the fiery cloud which encompassed him, and, gazing in thought upon the half-reproachful, yet most engaging, eyes of Jesus in the mystery of "the carriage of the cross," he hoped—he resolved, to give himself entirely to him for the future. Had it been for him to have described what he then saw and felt, he might have expressed himself in the following from "St. Peter's Complaint:"—

- "You flames divine, that sparkle out your heats,
And kindle pleasing fires in mortal hearts ;
You nectar'd ambries, you soul-feeding sweets ;
You graceful quivers of Love's dearest darts ;
You did vouchsafe to warm, to wound, to feast,
My cold, my stony, my now-famish'd breast.
- "These blazing comets, lightning flames of love,
Made me their warming influence to know ;
My frozen heart their sacred force did prove,
And at their looks did yield like melting snow.
They did not joys, in former plenty, crave ;
Yet sweets are crumbs where pinéd thoughts do starve."

Although growing exceedingly impatient, Carmen was so desirous of suborning Willibald at the trial his sincerity was now undergoing by Sir Francis Butwell and his daughter, that he was equally loth to disable or destroy him until, by repeated and persevering efforts to overcome him, he had quite satisfied himself that nothing in the shape of co-operation could be expected from him. Thus several days were now suffered to elapse, during which the prisoner was tortured by a contrivance that concealed the intention of those in whom it originated. A drug was mixed with his food, which gave rise to griping pains in the bowels and an insatiable thirst, whilst the wine he was supplied with had salt mixed in it.

But whilst all this was going on, a change in the heart of

one of the robbers, who had assisted at the flogging of the prisoner, was also taking place. Diego Capriola, as the reader will remember, was a merry fellow, with nothing in his composition savouring of the hero save an ample supply of physical courage. Morally, he was somewhat timid, and so was completely overawed by what he regarded as the magnificence of Carmen's character. The infidelities, therefore, of this obsequious follower were all most carefully concealed from the eyes of his master, whom he never wished to offend or injure in any way by any of those numerous deceptions he was compelled to practise on him by the untameable vehemence of his own desires, the most inconvenient of which was what, in the terminology of the phrenologists, is styled gustativeness: thus Carmen would have judged him quite erroneously had he, on discovering these infidelities, proclaimed him a secret enemy, a traitor, a hypocrite; there was nothing of this kind in him, but much of the animal. Diego was only not inviolably faithful, because he carried within him the heart of a beast: thus constituted, he was unable to witness, without vast uneasiness, the sufferings Willibald was forced to undergo. Carmen had never explained his plans to him further than to show that his object was to convert Willibald into a rogue; consequently he day by day grew more desirous of giving ease to the sufferer. At last he went so far as frequently to secrete about his person food of a more palatable kind and more wholesome than that intended for him by Carmen; and, finally, he resolved, if he could manage it, to let the bird fly some day.

"I would let you go," said he, accordingly, when his plans were matured, with a good-natured grin, as he put down the food he had brought with him, speaking like an epicure, who takes almost as much pleasure in beholding the delectation of another engaged with himself in the discussion of a choice morsel as in eating himself—"if I was sure ye'd take no stories with you about this place and the master?"

"Of course," said Willibald, "I should not do that."

"Well, but will you promise me?"

"Promise you?—to be sure I will."

"It 'ud be a pretty job if you turned informer. But I don't like to see you here being starved by inches—that's the truth. It may be all right, but I don't like to see it."

"Indeed!" exclaimed a voice at this moment, which seemed to strike the terrors of death into the heart of the speaker.

"You don't like to see such things, eh! You shall be bored with them no longer."

As he spoke, the captain plunged a long stiletto between the collar-bone and the neck of the merry little bandit, who instantly fell dead.

Hardly crediting the report of his own senses, as this deed of blood was enacted, Willibald could speak only with his heart to the Searcher of Hearts, whilst his eyes rested, with their usual mild expression, on the murderer, who, with a less appearance of excitement than many men exhibit after killing a gnat, said encouragingly to our hero,—

"Come, you shall find that you are no loser by this fellow's death. I heard you say you would promise him never to betray me if he would suffer you to depart—then I presume you can have no objection to promise me the same thing on the same condition?"

"I will promise so much. First, never to tell anybody that I know you to be a robber; secondly, never to utter a word likely, according to my judgment, to lead to your conviction, or that of any of your followers. So much I can and will promise; but on no consideration will I take part in any deception you may be practising, or desire to practise, on anybody."

The sagacious Carmen saw in a moment that this promise was sufficient to secure to a certain extent, though it might be involuntarily, the effective co-operation of his prisoner in his affair with Sophia Butwell; and so fully persuaded was he that Willibald could never break his promise, that he readily consented to give him his liberty on the conditions proposed.

More than a year had elapsed since the latter was first captured. During that time a great change had taken place in his outward appearance, and his clothes had become exceedingly shabby. That it might appear on his return to the paternal roof as if he had been travelling for his own amusement, Willibald having promised to maintain a profound silence regarding all that had happened to him during his absence, Carmen provided him with a suit of clothes which

were comparatively new, and, in short, with everything requisite for his complete equipment as a gentleman. Another understanding between them was, that Willibald, on regaining his liberty, should pay Carmen the sum of two hundred scudi.

It was late on a dark night (Simon Cowley's narrative faithfully records the date of the event) that again a bag was drawn over the prisoner's eyes; and that, accompanied by Carmen and three of his followers, he passed through the gate of the castle: then he was lifted again, as before. The unaccountable motion which he had noticed when he was first brought to the castle next occurred. It seemed exactly as if he were being taken up a very steep ladder; then, by the rustling of leaves, he judged he was carried some distance through a wood; then another steep descent was made. He had next to travel in a vehicle during something like two hours. When it stopped, a man, in the tone of an *employé*, said,—

“What hotel shall I drive you to?”

“Stop!” said another voice, “the gentleman can't see yet.”

The cap that covered his eyes was now suddenly removed, and his hands were freed.

“Oh!” exclaimed Willibald, perceiving at a glance what was the befitting reply, “drive me to the hotel——!”

The vetturino once more whipped his jaded horses, and, as the carriage entered——by the Roman road, Willibald was amused at the facility with which his own mind accommodated itself to the change of circumstances which gave him the post of command among those whom, only a few minutes before, he had been compelled to obey. His sensations were perfectly indescribable when the vetturino actually stopped at the hotel he had named, and, having removed his *sac de nuit* into the hotel, begged of him a *buona mano*.

CHAPTER XX.

If picture move, more should the pattern please ;
No shadow can with shadow'd things compare,
And fairest shapes whereon our loves do seize,
But silly signs of God's high beauties are.

R. SOUTHWELL, S. J.

THE Butwells lived exactly as if they firmly believed their very salvation depended on the success of their constant, serious, and systematic efforts to make themselves comfortable wherever they went. Hence, in all their domestic arrangements there was evidence of profound thought ; and Sir Francis and Lady Butwell looked as grave and sanctimonious whilst receiving their guests, when they gave a dinner-party, as if a funeral were about to take place. Something of this appeared even in the mien of Sophia on these occasions, whose quick sense of the ridiculous made her so often the terror of others. Their drawing-room at — was deluged with articles bespeaking the wealth, caprice, and taste of its occupants. They were constantly buying new things. Sophia never went out without making a purchase. In the midst of plenty she was still ever hungering after novelties, and exhibited such an insatiable appetite for variety, that had she lived long enough, the whole creation would have appeared at last, in her eyes, a poor and worthless stock—rubbish, all. The same love of change set her frequently drawing ; then she would seize the pen, but always ended by going to the piano ; where, in her despair, she would seek to hide herself in the umbrageous recesses of one of Beethoven's bewildering complications of sound.

Sir Francis had gone to the reading-room, and the mother and daughter sat together, the former working in worsted, the latter writing a letter.

Up to a certain period a woman possessing the requisite self-control and penetration is able to profit by the study of the character of a person of the opposite sex ; but this power is gradually stolen from her by this very person, from the moment she begins to be affected by his words. The *soi-disant* Conde de Valdonsella, as the reader will have gathered from what has been mentioned elsewhere of his protracted siege of her heart, had had his difficulties in advancing

matters as far as they were gone ; but fearing the consequences of a prolonged sifting on religious matters, he had, at last, confidentially, and with an appearance of genuine candour, told Sophia that she had deprived him of the power of thinking of religion of any kind, and that he expected to find in her all that had escaped his memory during the period which had elapsed since he had first become acquainted with her. By listening to representations of this kind, Sophia had at last become confident that, when once his wife, whatever there might be now mysterious and objectionable about him, she should be able to mould him so as to remove entirely all these harsher traits, and guide him for the future as a queen guides a powerful and warlike nation ; and with this thought she had just allowed herself to be engaged to him. In doing this she had found herself unable to avoid precipitating herself at the same time into his being in a way which made her feel as firmly united to him as if the marriage-vow had already been pronounced. She was the more reluctant on this very account to inform her father and mother of what she had done. Lady Butwell had never objected, but Sir Francis, who understood the world better, having gradually come to the decision that the Count was too mysterious a gentleman "for his money," now sought every occasion to disturb the harmony subsisting between the latter and his daughter. This, Sophia had observed, and it was this, together with the intensity of her feelings upon the subject, which caused her to hesitate at first to reveal to her father what had passed between them. She feared him not at all, but she feared much appearing, for the first time in her life, in his eyes rash, foolish, and susceptible. These fears, however, were not long suffered to predominate, as the conversation will show which presently engaged the worker in worsted and the letter-writer, introduced a few pages back.

"Don't you think," said Sophia, "it is rather too late in the day for the display of scruples on religious grounds ? Why did not papa *begin* with inquiries on this head, and why, if he had any doubts about the man's general respectability, did he not at once set on foot a searching inquiry ? Because, I suppose, he did not think this necessary when he was dazzled by the other recommendations that presented themselves, and did not wish to be beholden to inquiry after

he had pronounced from observation. It is owing entirely to his own conduct that I have never thought of such objections, and that I have at length consented to marry him."

Whilst she was yet speaking, and before her mother had had time to reply, Sir Francis himself entered the room.

After mentioning the names of several persons he had met, he continued :—

"And, by the bye, who else do you think I have seen? Our friend Willibald Cowley."

Both mother and daughter brightened up at the sound of the name.

"I am so glad," exclaimed Sophia.

"So am I," replied Sir Francis; "but the strangest thing is, that it appeared to me he had on a coat of mine."

The ladies looked up as if a riddle had been asked them, which they at once felt they must "give up." Sir Francis looked first at one and then at the other; at last, with the expression of a storyteller who beholds, with secret satisfaction, the effect of his cunning, he proceeded thus :—

"What! don't you see it? You know we have always marvelled at Cowley's stupidity in refusing to think it possible his son could have fallen into the hands of banditti; you will remember that ~~we~~ we have always felt convinced this was his fate. Well now, what does this coat of mine on his back but prove that the villains who took the portmanteau when we were coming here, containing that coat, are the self-same crew who have had Willibald in their clutches ever since his disappearance!"

This instance of her husband's sagacity and penetration so flooded the intellects of his wife with admiration, that she was struck with "mute amazement," and exhibited no signs of what was going on within, excepting by smiling a smile which she well knew to be the most captivating sort of smile for Sir Francis her face ever wore.

Sir Francis had long been a very active magistrate in a populous part of his native island, so that a clue to the discovery of the perpetrators of a robbery had all the attractions for him that the scent of a fox has for a foxhound. It was not now the sense of duty which animated him, but a propensity, acquired by the continued employment of his faculties in pursuits of this sort.

Just at this moment the Conde de Valdonsella was announced. After the customary greetings were over, "By the way, count," said Sir Francis—we should mention here, that the manner of the baronet had long ceased to be as respectful as it was at the commencement of their acquaintance—"By the way, count, I have just parted with your friend Mr. Willibald Cowley. He seemed to be in a hurry, so that I could not question him about his adventures during the last year; but I shall call (perhaps to-day) at the Villa Algorouki, when I shall perhaps hear more. I will then also, according to your desire, endeavour to ascertain from his replies whether your religious principles are sufficiently Protestant to suit the ideas of an English Protestant."

The count raised his eyebrows, and for a minute was silent, then he smiled—almost laughed, and said, in a tone irresistibly unctuous and engaging, "You must not expect a very distinct answer to your question, because he is scrupulous, and would be afraid of incurring the guilt of presumption by answering positively either one way or the other. But if he is very taciturn on the subject, you may be sure he has reasons for thinking what, according to his own principles, may be called the worst of me."

"I hope his scrupulosity will not keep him silent on another topic in which I am greatly interested."

"What is that, Sir Francis?"

"Why, the retreat of the robbers with whom he has been living lately."

"Oh! Is it possible? Can you still believe *that*?"

"It is proved to demonstration. He carries on his back at this moment evidence of the fact. The first thing I observed on meeting him was, that he wore a coat belonging to me, which was in one of the boxes the robbers succeeded in taking from us, before you came to the rescue."

To Carmen, this was a most interesting pass. He had enjoyed nothing so much for a long time.

"This is quite enough for me," continued Sir Francis, as his eye played unobtrusively with that of the impostor; "now, you shall see, count, how we English go to work soon as a trace presents itself, giving hopes that an outrage like this may soon be fastened on the guilty party."

This speech had no other effect on Carmen than to make

him long for an opportunity of taking out of the speaker a little of the national conceit it displayed. He saw, however, that this was not the time for thinking of such matters, and therefore strove at present to appear pleased at the occurrence of the opportunity which gave occasion to the vaunt. Her consent to marry him had occasioned a considerable increase of warmth in his feelings (such as they were) towards Sophia, so that, whilst he strained every nerve at this critical juncture to avoid detection, he was determined to practise abduction, should his disguise be penetrated before she had actually become his wife.

The reader will observe how much the continuance of his security depended at this time on the secrecy of Willibald ; this Carmen also marked, but without the slightest uneasiness.

Shortly after this Carmen took his leave, Sir Francis immediately ordered his carriage, and that same day, accompanied by his wife and daughter, drove to the Villa Algorouki.

It may be proper here to mention, that during Willibald's absence, the intimacy between the Butwells and the Cowleys had made little progress, although calls had been duly exchanged, in regular succession, from that time to the present. It is mainly to be attributed to this circumstance, that the name of the Conde di Valdonsella had never been mentioned by any member of one family in the hearing of the other. Carmen had ascertained that the Butwells were reserved before he alluded to his acquaintance with Willibald ; and he was careful to mention, at the same time, that the latter was the only one of the family he knew.

"We shall have a delightful drive back," said Sophia, as their carriage slowly ascended the hill that led up to the villa, which, as we have before remarked, was situated on the broad and almost level declivity of a mountain, the distant and craggy summit of which formed a barrier to the North.

"Rather too late a one to please me," said the mother ; "I only hope none of the robbers know how violently athirst you are for their blood."

"How in the world should they know that ?" exclaimed Sir Francis impatiently to his wife.

"I don't know," replied she, "but there are numbers of ways of course by which it might become known. The servants," she continued in a whisper, "may have mentioned it

in the hearing of robbers in disguise, who abound, you know, in ——."

The carriage now stood still beneath the porch of the villa—the stately Villa Algorouki,—which seemed to have wandered into the wilderness to hide, through pride, its matchless graces.

"Considering the distance," said Sir Francis to Captain Cowley, as the latter welcomed his visitors, "we are paying you a very late call, but I was in a hurry to inform you, should he not already have made his appearance here."

"Willibald has returned. He is in the house at this moment."

"How is he?"

"He looks anything but well; but the most distressing thing connected with his sudden reappearance is, that he has obliged us all to promise we will never ask him questions about anything that may have happened to him during his absence."

"I would never promise any such thing," replied Sir Francis with animation. "But this only shows, Captain Cowley, that he is not yet a free man,—that he is still entangled."

"You still think, then, that he has been in the hands of robbers? *We* are equally confident he has been visiting the Holy Land."

Sir Francis laughed as he continued, "For once, captain, condescend to be enlightened by a Protestant. You will hardly believe me when I tell you that the first thing I noticed about your son, on meeting him this morning, was, that he had on a coat that once belonged to me, and which I lost by the robbers on our way hither from Rome. My object in calling so soon, in addition to the desire I had to acquaint you with the fact of his return, was to ask him how he came by that coat."

"I will send for him forthwith to answer your question," said Captain Cowley, ringing the bell. Simon here rose, saying *he* would go.

On entering his brother's room he said, "Here's old Butwell here, and he says you've got on a coat of his; and he will have it that this is a proof you have been all this while the companion of the same gang who robbed him a year and

a half ago near F——, because it was on that occasion he had that coat taken from him. As you have forbidden us to question you about your adventures during the time of your mysterious absence, I thought I would tell you this before you entered the room, that you might be on your guard in case the question Butwell proposes putting to you should prove a poser."

"Surely," said Willibald, without hesitating a moment, "he forgets there are such things as pawnbrokers' shops at ——. Wherever there is much thieving going on, capital goods of every description for retail dealers are sure to abound. If this is his coat, the sooner it reaches his hands again the better."

Willibald took it off as he spoke, and having brushed it well, gave it to his brother, requesting him to take it back.

"Won't you come down yourself? I'll lend you a coat. Lady and Sophia Butwell are there too."

"How are they?"

"Very well. It is currently reported, and I believe it to be true, that Sophia is going to be married to the Conde di Valdonsella. You have heard his name before. He has some Spanish blood in him, and seems to know the way to get hold of first-rate Arabians."

"Is there any chance, do you think, of the Butwells ever becoming Catholics?"

"Not the least, I should say; they haven't got over the effect of your repulse last year yet."

"If that be the case, I will go down now."

The speaker having put on another borrowed coat, in the place of that he had just taken off, descended with his brother. The first person his eye fell on as he entered the room was Carmen, personating the fictitious personage called by the Butwells El Conde di Valdonsella.

A feeling of almost ungovernable indignation filled his breast at the sight of this monster of iniquity beneath his father's roof, and in the act there of prosecuting an infamous scheme involving the ruin of a family, present now also as guests and fellow-countrymen.

"Willibald," said Captain Cowley, as the former entered the room, "I was not aware you were acquainted with the

Conde di Valdonsella. You have been *compagnons de voyage* I presume lately?"

The eyes of every person in the room, and there were present there now Mrs. Cowley, Lady Butwell, Sophia, Sir Francis and Simon, in addition to those alluded to above, were now turned towards Willibald, who, with a look that in the eyes of those who had no means of penetrating further into its meaning, bespoke bashfulness and nothing more, replied in a low and quiet voice:

"I have known him for some time."

The Butwells all looked inquiringly at the count, Sir Francis, with an expression so hostile, that Carmen laughed bitterly as he answered—"I did not wish to make known what my friend Cowley purposed keeping a secret; but your looks, Sir Francis, show that it would be unwise on my part to remain silent any longer. It is true, then, that during the greater part of the time of his absence, he has been in the hands of banditti, from whose hands I had the pleasure of delivering him. The coat he had on, on his first re-appearance, was purchased of a dealer in second-hand and ready-made clothes in ——. He has not told me so; but I shrewdly suspect his refusal to relate anything connected with his adventures during the last year proceeds from a vow imposed upon him by the robbers as the condition on which he was liberated."

A profound silence ensued. It was broken again by the last speaker, who, with perfect *sang-froid*, continued to Sir Francis, "You are surprised to see me here. I called at your house just before I started, and hearing you were gone hither, I thought you would have a lonely drive back, and so resolved to follow you. I think, Sir Francis, we should not delay our departure now much longer."

Sir Francis felt himself quite carried off his legs by this suggestion of the count. It seemed to him as if the other exercised over him at that moment an irresistible power, for it was wholly against his inclination that he arose and acceded to the proposition.

Whilst the *soi-disant* count spoke, the practised eye of his late victim had read in his features an intent that none present but himself could guess at. Beneath the ingratiating smile which alone was observed by the rest of the party, he

marked the stern imperiousness which, in a general way, only showed itself through the expression of the features when it was on the point of taking an active form. Of the rest of the party it was not Sir Francis alone who had been annihilated, for the time being, by the viewless operation of Carmen's iron will on his own. At this moment, all felt that they were in the presence of "a great man," and were precipitated at once into a state of mind perfectly favourable to the designs of their enemy. Willibald alone was set on resistance.

"Take my advice," said he, shrewdly addressing himself to Sophia Butwell in the first instance, "and do not attempt to return to — to-night." Then turning to Carmen, he said, in a tone perfectly calm and friendly, "You, you know, are well mounted, and would run little risk by a journey home at this hour; but a carriage affords little protection against an assault of the kind I apprehend." His voice grew still more friendly and familiar as he added, still addressing Carmen, "The truth is, I have been confidentially informed to-day that an attack is meditated on the carriage of Sir Francis Butwell this evening."

At once perceiving the design of the speaker with reference to himself, Carmen, though irritated by the dexterity with which Willibald was foiling his present scheme, without the least approach to a violation of his promise not to betray him, replied:

"In that case it would be certainly unadvisable to return to-night."

This conversation had been listened to with breathless interest by all present, and Lady Butwell could not restrain the feeling of gratitude she felt towards Willibald for his timely hint. She rushed up to him, and, seizing his hand, said, in a trembling voice, "I shall never be sufficiently thankful to you for this. You have saved us all from destruction. I have felt for some time past that Sir Francis was unwittingly making himself obnoxious to those dreadful men by his constant efforts to inspire the Government with the determination of treating them with greater severity.

Carmen in the mean time continued in a very mild voice, as if speaking to the whole party, "It may be as well, perhaps, if I start immediately; for, although I am not the person for

whose destruction this plot is laid, I have rendered myself so obnoxious to them in times past, that I should have a poor chance of escaping with my life if I fell into their hands to-night."

Captain Cowley could not hear these words without offering the speaker a bed, and pressing him to stay over the night; but it was with a feeling of regret that he heard his offer accepted,—a feeling in which every other creature in the room, excepting Sophia, abundantly participated, for there was an unreality about the blandness of the pretended count which kept the sympathies of those around him in a painfully suspended state.

It was now growing dark, and the whole party proceeding to the drawing-room, the pianoforte was thrown open, and Sophia Butwell launched into the sea of harmony. Whilst she played with her usual marvellous brilliancy, secretly selecting pieces that she thought likely to please Willibald, he sat apart, thinking of the compact he had entered into whilst recognising in the scourging he had recently received from the "hangman's hands" the reproving speech of Him who had heretofore, by comparatively mild means, signified to him what he must do to be saved. Soon, as he secretly conversed thus with his Redeemer, the room in which he sat with his inmates assumed for him the character of a school-room. The intense conceit of nearly all present then became painfully conspicuous; Carmen alone seemed filled with a different spirit; he seemed only a personification of the malice of the devil: and, indeed, on that account, so much a child of the devil did he appear, that, being so sensibly in the presence of Christ, Willibald felt that a word from him would be sufficient to cause his instant departure. "So long as he is here," said he to himself, "nothing can be done for the relief of the others." Accordingly, he presently approached Carmen, who was playing at whist with Captain Cowley, Lady Butwell, and Sir Francis, and whispered in his ear, "Leave this house immediately."

"Who dares to speak to me thus?" replied the other, starting to his feet. The menacing tone and sudden action of the speaker shocked the nerves of everybody present, excepting Willibald, who, in reply, did nothing but quietly add with a smile, "You surely understand." None but Carmen

could see what the eye of the speaker said in addition to these words. It was the hint conveyed by them that he suddenly added, in a very different manner, "True, I remember now." And then turning to those he had just been playing with, he added, "Most fortunately, I am just reminded of an engagement elsewhere that demands my instant departure. Good night to you all!"

With these words he hurriedly left the room. Simon followed to order his horse for him. No conversation took place between them, and the instant the horse made his appearance, Carmen hurried to mount. He started at a foot pace, but shortly afterwards, as Simon stood gazing on the sleeping landscape around, his ears informed him that the retiring horseman had got into a full gallop.

On returning to the drawing-room he found every one round his brother. Mrs. Cowley seemed quite angry with him for behaving to the count in so unceremonious a manner. Willibald was laughing, and seemed to be so exceedingly amused at the confusion which had been caused by the recent sudden departure, that no one could long look at without sympathizing with him. At last, seeing all in so tractable a humour and looking inquisitively at him—for his conduct had thoroughly mystified the whole party—

"I'll tell you a story," said he, "if you'll be good, and ask no questions as I proceed?"

"Oh, yes, do let us have a story," said Sophia, "it will be just the thing for finishing a day like this."

The attention of all was at this moment attracted by a knocking overhead.

"What can that be?" said Captain Cowley earnestly. "The room overhead hasn't been opened for years, and is always kept locked. It is our 'haunted room,' you must know. When I bought this place, the ghost being a fixture, I was obliged to take him also at a valuation; in other words, as it was universally known that the last occupants of the villa had left it through fear of this ghost, no Italian could be found who would buy it, and I therefore stipulated that a considerable deduction from the sum at first asked for it should be made by way of compensation for this take-off from its marketable value. I afterwards pressed for another deduction on the score of the loss in the matter of a whole room,

one of the most spacious in the house, occasioned by the presence of the same ghost."

"Am I to understand, captain," said Sir Francis, "that you really mean what you say—that you do not use this room because you believe it to be haunted?"

"We *cannot* use it."

"Why not?"

"We can none of us open the door."

"Get a sledge-hammer!"

"I have myself belaboured it with one till I was quite exhausted, and so have my sons, but in each case without effect. We have also tried with the help of a priest, but with not better success.

"There is a very decrepit old woman living in a village about five miles off, who says, that a story which was in people's mouths in her youth, was supposed to be in some way connected with this door. People had it, that the gentry who built this house were a wicked set. It was more than suspected that the head of the house was a renegade friar. The particulars of his history, previous to his appearance in this country, were not known, but it was generally understood that, after taking the habit of St. Francis, and after the solemnization of his profession, he had married a beautiful and wealthy Russian princess, and that after the birth of several children they had come here and built the Villa Algorouki, so called after her name. The children, four in number, turned out, with the exception of one—so ran the story—perfect devils, so that their father and mother found it impossible to live beneath the same roof with them, and sent them away at an early age to be educated in France. It was during their absence that the father died—in that room, it is supposed, which ever since the removal of his body has remained closed, by a power of its own, the nature and action of which is, to say the least of it, perfectly unintelligible. And I can assure you this is a conclusion not hastily drawn. The most remarkable part of the story is, that an old friar, living in a solitary convent situated in the most desolate part of the Abruzzi mountains, used to say, in reference to this room, that the reputation attaching to it was a curse, and that it should remain closed till that person should seek to open the door who was intended by Divine Providence to

repair the injury done to the holy order of St. Francis, by the apostasy of this miserable man."

Just as he had finished his account a knocking overhead was heard again.

The Cowleys, who had been accustomed in all that regarded the haunted room to a silence perfectly unbroken, so that it had gradually acquired in their minds the character of the silence bespeaking entire vacancy, felt truly astonished at this noise, and Mrs. Cowley, though a woman of spirit, was so appalled by it that she became deadly pale, and was obliged to seek the support of a sofa for her trembling and powerless limbs. The bold heart of her husband also palpitated violently, and his hair stood on end—a phenomena noticed with wonder by Sir Francis, who had never before witnessed an instance of this effect of terror. The young men were also alarmed, but they took good care to conceal it. Lady Butwell nicely explained the state of her own feelings and perhaps that of her daughter's and husband's, when she ejaculated—

"I would not live in this house for anything in the world. As mere visitors, we may be amused by such things, but I should die of fear if I were in your place. What avails the romance of the place and all its other attractions that render the day here so recreative to the world-worn spirit, if night renders it so hideous, replacing all its charms with horrors of Cerberus and blackest midnight born? As it is, which of us will be able to sleep a wink here to-night?"

"Did you never hear this knocking before?" said Sir Francis, as he still contemplated with wonder Captain Cowley's erected "fell of hair."

"Never; indeed we scarcely ever think of this room, excepting when, for the amusement of visitors, we relate the circumstances you have heard."

"Do let us go up," said Sir Francis, "and see if we cannot, with our united strength, force open the door. Depend upon it, the sound was caused by a rat scratching himself, and knocking his hind-foot against the floor."

"Rats could never get up there," exclaimed Willibald; "besides, there is not a rat on the premises."

Sir Francis looked incredulous, and repeated his challenge so tauntingly, that Captain Cowley could no longer hesitate

to accept it. His sons were of course ready to follow him anywhere.

"I will never be left here alone," exclaimed Mrs. Cowley ; if you go we must follow."

The Villa Algorouki was an oblong building, having a façade which completely hid the roof. The top of this façade was ornamented with urns. Projecting ornaments of a very tasteful character surrounded each of the windows, twelve in a row, and unusually large. There were three rows, the uppermost being little inferior in point of size to the middle and lower tiers. The rooms within, as is mostly the case in buildings of this character, opened one into the other—a contrivance which has at least the advantage of reserving for the apartments the space that would otherwise be taken up by a passage.

On reaching the top of the wide, marble staircase, whose familiar echoings were far less eloquent to the ears of the Cowleys at this moment than they proved to their guests, Captain Cowley, turning to a lofty door on the right, opened it and said, "This is the suite of apartments, at the end of which is the room we are about to visit. Although, as you perceive, slightly furnished, these rooms are scarcely ever used. My sons call them the wilderness, and retire into them occasionally when they want to experience the sense of perfect solitude."

"Company in trees and sermons in stones!" replied Willibald, "but in empty rooms like these there is positively nothing that can hinder you from feeling what it is to be really alone. With these ideas I am unable to assent to the aptness of Cowper's exclamations on contemplating the sorrows of Alexander Selkirk. It was not so much solitude that Selkirk feared as the consequences to himself of being left defenceless on an uninhabited island, overrun with imaginary enemies. True solitude leaves even the imagination vacant, so that unless you enter it determined beforehand to rest content with the simple exercises of the will, it will prove unbearably dull."

"Yes, yes ; but this is not the time, Willibald," said his father, playfully, "for an ascetic dissertation on solitude. We have come up, I see, without a hammer ; run and fetch the heaviest you can find."

Willibald immediately retired ; the rest of the party in the meantime reached the door of the haunted room. It was a double door, and looked so fragile that Sir Francis, the instant he came in sight of it, exclaimed, "I will attribute its resistance to a supernatural power, if I can't lay that door flat at the first charge. Mrs. Cowley, do you give me leave to do as much mischief to it as I can?"

"I only fear you will hurt yourself rather."

Sir Francis, who was six feet high, with bone and bulk in proportion, and athletic, went back about twenty feet : "But," said he, suddenly, "let us first try whether it will yield to ordinary pressure." With that, he took hold of the handle of the door and turned it, first one way and then the other ; then he shook the door ; then endeavoured to peep through the keyhole, though it was quite dark within ; at last, satisfied that the fastening must be on the inner side, he again prepared for a charge. As Mrs. Cowley had anticipated, it was himself, not the door, that went down on this collision ; still the baronet was to be admired for the *abandon* with which he had dashed into the door, striking it in the midst with his shoulder.

"I feel," he said, "now, that it can be secured with nothing less ponderous than a thick iron bar passing right across the door, and entering at each end pretty deep into the wall."

"If I might judge by its power of resistance," replied Captain Cowley, "I should say that there must be, at least, six such bars ; for we, as I have before mentioned, have plied it repeatedly with the heaviest sledge-hammer we could get at —, and have had a man to try his hand at it who is famous for his strength and skill as a hammerer. But directly Willibald returns you shall try it again, Sir Francis, with the hammer."

Whilst this conversation was going on, everybody present, not even excepting the speakers and actors, became sensible of a presence within the room they were striving to enter, which made them feel a repugnance to the operations in which they were engaged. At last this feeling assumed in Mrs. Cowley the character of a vehement dislike to "the job," and very soon, without taking much trouble to array itself in the garb of reason, it made itself known in very energetic language to all present.

"I beg you will not use the sledge-hammer!" she said, as her son entered and delivered that implement into the hands of his father.

"Why not, my dear?" said the captain, knitting his brows, but not to express anger.

"I beg you will not," continued the lady, importunately.

"Why not, mamma?" remonstrated Willibald.

"I entreat you, not. If it cannot be opened without all this violence, I feel that we should rest content with its continuing as it is."

"Without violence!" exclaimed Willibald in a tone of incredulity. "However," he continued, with prompt obedience, "as we are not to bring the hammer to bear, let us each successively try to open it by gentler means; and that the gentlest may be employed before rougher ones are resorted to, let the ladies begin. Miss Butwell, perhaps, will be the first to try if an entrance may be *won*?"

Everybody present now successively tried the inhospitable door, but ineffectually, as usual, until it came to Willibald. The astonishment of none was so great as his own when, upon his approaching his hand, the door instantly flew open. All but Willibald started back. He merely turned to take the lamp held by his brother. "Dear me," he exclaimed, "how fortunate! Lend me the light!"

"I desire you not to enter," exclaimed Mrs. Cowley, imperiously.

"Not enter!"

"Nonsense!" cried Captain Cowley, "he *must* enter—go on, and we will follow."

The gentlemen now passed with the light into the midst of the haunted room. It was spacious and lofty. A four-post bedstead, with the curtains drawn, stood at one end: six chairs of an old fashion, a table in the middle of the room, a chest of drawers and a dressing-table, with a washing-stand, constituted the furniture, which, clothed in the dust of a hundred years, had a spectral look, calculated to deter the beholder from approaching near, and much more from meddling with any of them. There were two pictures—portraits, hanging side by side each other, and on the table, whitened with dust and mildew, lay an article of dress, which Willibald seized, held up, and earnestly gazed upon with a growing

interest and even fondness, as the familiar shape, now stiffened with dust and embedded damp, drew from the lips of his father and brother the exclamation—"A Franciscan habit!"

At the same moment an unearthly cry—so new to every ear, that all within the room hurried to the door in the idea that some stranger had suddenly joined the party without—issued from the lips of Mrs. Cowley. Repeating it immediately with frantic energy, and falling to the ground in a horrible convulsion, she quickly satisfied every one present that the voice, though it seemed not hers, had come, at least, from her breast. But now again she spoke like *herself*, though hysterically. She repeated the word "No!" in rapid succession, in a tone so piteously deprecatory of some dreaded occurrence, the apprehension of which was evidently the cause of all this present agitation, that everybody desired to tranquillize her. Captain Cowley's heart seemed pierced through and through by the sound.

"What—what do you fear?" said he; "don't be alarmed."

"Oh, then, make him promise," sobbed the lady; "promise—promise me, Willibald, that you will never become a friar!"

"Willibald, do you hear your mother?" exclaimed the captain in a low, anxious, prompting tone.

"I do, my dear father, but I can never promise that."

His mother here suddenly sat up, and, with an energy that made its power felt like an electric shock by all present, she exclaimed, "Disobedient, godless, ungrateful, wicked, cruel! Well, well, you will drive me mad! Ah, what a day is this!" A terrible scream which made every hearer feel as if his brain were turning completed her reply.

"Simon," said his father, "run and fetch another lamp, and desire Giulietta to come up with some cold water!"

All now stood around Mrs. Cowley, whose convulsions continued with appalling violence. In the midst of them she again yelled out in a voice hideously fierce, "I will never forgive him! I forbid it! As his mother I insist! He a Franciscan friar! I will die a thousand deaths rather than tolerate it!"

Then she intoned another scream—a terrific one: so long

and piercing was it that there was not a room in the spacious edifice in which it did not ring as though it would rend the walls asunder.

The servants now came running up, and on beholding their mistress on the ground and horribly convulsed, with the dreaded door of the haunted room gaping upon her, they exhibited signs of excitement which filled the Butwells with astonishment. The impression of the domestics had ever been that it was by a diabolical power this door had been kept shut so long, and in the agonies of their mistress they firmly believed they beheld the effects of a sudden possession on the part of the evil spirit, which had just been forced to evacuate its old haunt. Whilst some, therefore, ran to the chapel for holy water, two others asked of Captain Cowley if they should not go for a priest. He replied to this question with considerable asperity of manner, whilst his words almost scandalized the poor domestics.

"A priest! No! Of what use would a priest be in a case of this sort? What have you got there? Holy water—take it away!"

Mrs. Cowley, too, opening her eyes at the sound of the proposition, said drily, "How absurd! I insist that nobody goes!" Then, addressing her husband, she added, "I hope you will see that none go."

Lady Butwell all this time stood shaking like a house in an earthquake, and at last, in hardly audible accents, and speaking very slowly, she said to Sir Francis, "Let us go! Let us leave this house at once! I would rather fall into the hands of robbers than pass the night here."

Sir Francis appeared uncertain what he ought to do. Sophia looked exceedingly sulky; yet, being interested, she vigorously set her face against her mother's move. "We can't go now."

But Lady Butwell at this moment fastened on Willibald, apparently the only person present who was not excited.

"Would you," said she, employing the lady's eloquence, which depends wholly on tone, "have the goodness to order our carriage?"

"But you are not going?"

"Thank you, yes—I had rather. I could not pass the night here, thank you!"

"Why not? What are you afraid of?" said Willibald, smiling. "Come with me."

Lady Butwell followed with her husband and Sophia, but said, "I could not sleep in this house."

"Not just here, perhaps, but we have an escape from this region of darkness which I am sure will serve you more satisfactorily than the dangerous road that leads to ——." As he spoke he led hastily down stairs, and then by a long passage to the chapel. Suspecting what he alluded to, the lady unwillingly followed, and it was with a feeling of disgust that she found herself presently there, and confronting a figure of the size of life, brilliantly illuminated, representing the Blessed Virgin.

"Stay here till I come for you," said he, "and then, if you wish it, I will order your carriage."

The smell of the flowers placed around and before the figure, the gladdening effect of the bright light, and the extraordinary beauty of the statue, affected the senses of the three strangers in a way which at once removed the passing feeling of anger they had experienced on first finding themselves in the chapel. The poet might have been excused for an utterance so redolent of poetical simplicity, had he been gazing on this statue when he said, —

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever."

It is to be attributed to this circumstance, we suppose, that the Butwells presently sat down, as if content for the time being with their situation, and, preserving an unbroken silence, continued the study of the marble soul before them.

Mrs. Cowley was given to the encouragement of sensible devotion, and her Spanish instincts had rendered her rather conspicuous among her Italian friends for her devotion to the mystery of the Immaculate Conception. With this, went of course ideas of the personal beauty of Our Blessed Lady, which no human skill could satisfy. The present effort, however, had pleased the lady well, and less fastidious critics could find no fault in it. Its aim was to prove, as it were, by *internal evidence*, that she whom it represented was conceived without sin. The idea had been suggested by Mrs. Cowley to the artist, who had taken it readily, and engaged to do his utmost to furnish this *quasi*-mystical proof by the

medium of the chisel. When he had completed it, several days were allowed to elapse before he could bring himself to challenge the criticism of his employer, and when he ventured to call, he began by declaring that, however contemptible the performance might appear, he himself had so strong a devotion to it, that he would willingly keep it for his own use, if the lady should feel disappointed with it. Mrs. Cowley, however, had no sooner seen it than, satisfied of its superiority to all similar efforts she had yet beheld, she was impatient to snatch it from the reluctant hands of the artist.

A certain amount of the useful power that operates through the senses is common of course to all holy images, but rarely is one seen endowed to the same extent in this way as that exhibited by the present one. The grossest minds are susceptible of delight from the contemplation of female beauty ; now, superadded to the power derived from its beauty, was that derived from the unearthly devotion which the illuminated genius of the artist had infused into this marble—a starry love of the Eternal, subsisting without help or hindrance from the body or the world, and made visible to the eye by the expression of the features, though exempt as a thing of spirit from aught of that fiery heat which characterized (for instance) the devotion of St. Philip Neri. This power changed the feeling of delight derived from the contemplation of the beauty of the statue into a faint, imperfect participation in the spirit it represented.

We shall succeed best, perhaps, in conveying an idea of the effect of this statute by means of a comparison, which, however, will only be of use to the limited number of our readers who may happen to have seen a person walking in his sleep, and can remember the sensation they experienced on first falling in with the somnambulist in full sail. Anything we esteem supernatural makes its strongest impression on the *soul*, not on the *senses* ; hence, to a person previously unable to conceive the distinction between soul and body, the sight of any such object will be likely to make him more sensible of this difference. The soul receives, as it were, a *twitch*, and the senses a *stunning blow*, at one and the same moment ; hence, for that moment we become preternaturally spiritual. Similar, to a certain extent, was the effect produced by this statue. The flesh declined ; the spirit rose suddenly, and

with a sort of violence, as you read in the countenance—"conceived without sin."

Sir Francis Butwell felt astonished at the elevation of character it exhibited. So elevated did it appear to him, that he was elated on finding himself able to follow it, and was consequently longing, as he gazed, for the time when he should be at liberty to descant on it, *vivâ voce*.

Sophia, because she also saw these things, was mortified, and soon shrank from the further contemplation of an object which made her so sensible of her own inferiority as a child of God. In this mood she fell in thought upon Willibald, and quarrelled with him for preferring spiritual to material things; he showed, she thought, that he lacked mettle—that he was "a worm, and no man."

Lady Butwell, on the contrary, whose self-love had been despoiled ever since she had become one flesh with Sir Francis, was utterly unable to resist the draught on her spiritual sympathies that the figure made, soon as the eye had completed its survey and made its report to the third faculty of her soul—"conceived without sin." As the autumnal south wind sports with the first-fallen of the leaves of summer, so did this mighty wind from Heaven threaten delightfully to lift to the third heaven the feeble spirit of this poor Protestant; but it threatened only, and left it then to its own cogitations.

Bringing to her memory, in a lively way, the fact of the existence of such a person as the Mother of God, the continued existence—either in heaven or in hell—she could not suppose that she, whom all generations were to call *Blessed*, was buried with Dives in hell, and therefore it was among the blessed spirits that her meditations were compelled to place her.

The image seemed to speak thus to Lady Butwell, "If I was once his mother I must be his mother still, and if I am his mother I must be your mother also, and you ought to honour me as such—'Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land,' but *that* you never do, in thought, word, or deed; you never think of me, invoke me, or do anything in my honour. Heaven is, *being a member of the Holy Family*; and they who despise the means of entering into this connection are the proud, the hard-

hearted, the self-sufficient, though they may not believe this of themselves, or seem so to others, and these are the reprobate, the brethren of Saul, who was so mighty in his resistance of the many solicitations of divine grace."

Although this was but an imaginary speech, that is, one that the lady herself put into the mouth of the image, yet its identity with what appeared to her, at the same time, *true in the abstract*, was so obvious, that she found herself almost powerless to withhold the act it solicited. With what ease she assented, and yet to what a sublime altitude was she raised in the world of intelligence and faith by that small act of candour. As she felt her natural affections flowing spontaneously towards the Mother of God, and saw, at the same time, how, by that union, she was raised to a new position with reference to her Divine Son, even to a participation in the sense of her blessed maternity, she said to herself, "Yes, this is Heaven, and no other place, and here would I remain for ever."

It was without impatience the party within the chapel heard approaching, at last, the footsteps of Willibald. They, however, slipped on their masks with the speed of lightning, that nought might be traced of the impressions they had respectively received. Lady Butwell could not, however, deny that she had become heedless where they passed the remainder of the night, the last impressions having completely obliterated those she had received, to the utter discomfiture of the inner man, from the appalling scene she had just witnessed above. Willibald was, therefore, now permitted to lead them back to the drawing-room, whence the ladies were conducted to their respective bed-rooms.

There was, however, little sleeping anywhere that night in the Villa Algorouki. The opening of the door of the haunted room was an event of no small interest to all the inmates, whilst every now and then an unearthly scream, in the direction of Mrs. Cowley's bed-room, spoke to each heart in a way which roused it to a state of preternatural sensibility.

"That's a devil, I'm sure," exclaimed a female servant, to another sleeping in the same room.

"How d'you know?" asked the other.

"I once saw a woman exorcised, and before the devil went out of her he made her yell and scream just in that way. I

see through it all quite plainly. It's all because Master Willibald's going to be a Franciscan, and is getting out of the devil's clutches, to be converted into a powerful enemy. Now, you mark ; you'll see to-morrow everybody in the house set upon preventing him following his vocation. If he's wise he'll go to Father Fatioja the first thing, and keep out of their way as much as possible. If I see him I'll tell him so too."

The speaker continued to think, but she spoke no more. With her beads in her hand, devoting her *aces* one to this object and another to that, she lay till the sun began to tint the ceiling of her room. She then dressed herself, and softly descending, knocked at the door in which Willibald was accustomed to sleep. Being already dressed he opened the door.

"You must be pleased to excuse the liberty I am taking," she commenced, with an expression on her face which would have won an audience from a Nero.

"I think I know what you are going to say," replied Willibald, smiling good-humouredly ; "it is the old story, 'Go to the priest.'"

With a modest smile the cook continued, "You'll have everybody against you before long, for the old gentleman has got possession of your mamma's soul, that's certain."

"I am of the same opinion," replied Willibald, "and had already determined on starting off immediately to consult Father Fatioja, before you knocked at the door."

Willibald now descended with his humble adviser, and was in the next minute walking briskly in the direction of the Dominican convent, in which his old confessor and preceptor still resided.

CHAPTER XXI.

Thy sugared poison now hath wrought so well,
That thou hast made me to myself a hell.

R. SOUTHWELL, S. J.

ON the same day, but before Willibald had returned from the convent, whilst the Butwells with their host and his younger son sat at breakfast (Mrs. Cowley still remained extremely ill, and was confined to her room), a servant entered, informing Sir Francis that there was a poor woman at the door who wished to speak to him.

"What does she want?" replied the baronet sluggishly.

"Take her this," interposed the Captain, tendering a small coin, "and dismiss her."

In a minute or two the servant returned. He said the woman had gratefully accepted the alms, but that still she seemed very much to wish for an interview with Sir Francis; she had added, at the same time, that the young lady would do as well. Sophia slowly rose and went out of the room in silence.

The chief happiness of this young lady, as the reader is well aware, consisted in the contemplation of her own person, talents, accomplishments, and performances. She was herself the sun of her own existence, and was, therefore, generally happiest when least distracted. It afforded her little pleasure to be in the society of others, if their presence demanded the smallest share of that attention which she so dearly loved to direct undividedly towards herself. Several things had occurred since her arrival at the Villa Algorouki which had occasioned her a good deal of annoyance. The principal, however, was the apparent inability exhibited by nearly every member of the Cowley family to appreciate adequately her own personal attractions. No one seemed in the smallest degree affected by her presence; and since her visit to the chapel where she had seen a striking proof of the devotion of Willibald to another, whom, according to her apprehension, he even went so far as to idolize, she had allowed a host of proud and angry thoughts to rush into her soul, whose presence was discovered without by a cold, disdainful look,

which made Captain Cowley fear she had passed a very uncomfortable night.

With these feelings it consoled her to reflect that El Conde was a giant in comparison with these, and that she was mistress of *his* affections at all events.

So thinking, yet deeply immersed in the *sulks*, she approached the poor woman. A searching glance surveyed her countenance as she did so ; and Sophia felt that the impression she had made on the stranger was extremely unfavourable. In general, she regarded all beggars as gypsies ; but it gave her some little trouble in the present instance to resist an inclination, induced by the critical expression of the beggar's eye, secretly to exert herself in order to improve the impression her first approach had produced.

Such is the weakness of our nature, that those who are the proudest are commonly the most destitute of that profound contempt for the goodwill and esteem of their fellow-men which they so constantly profess. It sometimes happens however, and it was so in the case of Sophia Butwell, that the sight of this goodwill and esteem instantly destroys the relish for it, thus giving an appearance of inaccessibility,—an appearance only, however, for, unaided by grace, man is not *able* to attain to a state of such independence. Lucifer himself is galled by the reproof which is his portion to all eternity ; and every human being feels and must resent, by curses or by lamentations, albeit the tongue remains silent, the entire withdrawal from his soul of the manifestation of love from some quarter or other.

Sophia had lately acquired a sufficient knowledge of the Italian language to be able to speak it tolerably. She was rather fond of trying her hand at it, especially with people she was sure would not criticize her ; indeed, it is extremely probable she would not, in the present instance, have complied with the request which had brought her to the door, had it not been for the opportunity promised by it of a little conversation in Italian. She now asked the stranger what she wanted, speaking in the cold, unsympathising tone which indicates a fancied superiority and distinctness of nature on the part of the speaker in reference to the party addressed.

The critical intelligence of the stranger's eye increased to an appearance of familiarity as she replied, "I feel myself

bound to inform you, madam, that the person you have known some time and treated with confidence, under the impression that he is a nobleman of high birth and character, is an impostor."

This was the greatest humiliation Sophia had ever received in her life. A flush appeared at her temples, announcing a violent disturbance of the imagination; but the state of her feelings was otherwise pretty successfully concealed from the stranger's eye. This appearance of calmness, however, could not have been long maintained had the motive for holding out been of a character ten times as strong as was her desire to conceal from the informant what she suffered from the blow she had just received. The countenance of this individual, indicating as it did an habitual state of enmity with the contemptible in every form, forbade the utterance, as, indeed, it precluded the experience, of a doubt of her veracity; Miss Butwell therefore felt that she should be lying to herself should she pretend to disbelieve her statement: either, therefore, she must, by a mighty effort, detach her affections at once from the impostor, or stand convicted of an unprincipled passion for his person. Everything in and about her rendered it morally impossible that she should occupy this latter position for an atom of time. She cannot be said to have thought of it as a possibility. It was necessary, therefore, that she should now at once, both inwardly and outwardly, what is expressively called *break with*, the strong one who had so far succeeded in encompassing her with his toils.

On such occasions, to excite, if we can, a sympathetic action of our passions is a great relief to our weak nature. We will not affirm of Sophia that she *deliberately* invoked the aid of angry tears; but, at all events, they soon made their appearance, and with them came a torrent of wrathful words, the unmistakable product of insulted pride. Had she not been solemnly affianced to El Conde, she would have been able to act on this occasion in conformity with her usual habits; but, by her present position, she was radically incapacitated for the display of self-possession and that silent contempt which is better adapted than anything else for marking our abhorrence of what is contemptible. Her strong understanding was taxed to the utmost at this moment to enable her to

moderate her speech. An expression of compassion gleamed in the stranger's eye as she gazed for a moment on the altering countenance of the untamed daughter of Eve; she did not, however, venture to speak; but as she hurriedly withdrew, her expressive countenance explained everything. *Now I have done my devoir. What course should be pursued with these facts before you, I leave you to decide.*

Sophia, *imprimis*, hastily retired to her chamber, that she might hide the tears she strove in vain, during the next ten minutes, to repress.

The malignant element in her character had never, up to the present moment, received a summons to action. As with some persons, fear and confidence may be said to form the steam and the piston of their being, so, in some, may it be said that ire actuates, whilst prudence turns to account the impelling force of the other element. Rage, not terror, was the form that Sophia Butwell's impotency was inclined to take. She was one to retaliate upon, rather than to implore, the heel that had been raised to crush her. She had lived, spiritually speaking, in comparative indolence hitherto, because no object had presented itself of importance sufficient, in her view, to deserve to taste of her resentment. Carmen, if he had not succeeded in enamouring her judgment of himself, had at least succeeded in deeply impressing her with the sense of the vast capacity of his soul. She had even been compelled to go so far as to admit that, in point of spiritual energy and experience, he was her master. Her whole being, therefore, now became rampant, and she aspired to a complete triumph over the impostor by the help of the strong arm of the law, to be evoked, for this object, by her father and factotum.

CHAPTER XXII.

SIR FRANCIS and his lady were slowly walking up and down the terrace in front of the villa ; the latter feeling happier than she had ever felt before. The joy she experienced was also different in *quality*, as it was produced, not by the contemplation of any object or state of things belonging to the visible world, but by the newly-acquired sense of the maternal affection entertained for herself by that greatest and best of all human personages, the Queen of Heaven, the Mother of Jesus Christ. The innocent emotions which had slumbered now since the days of her childhood, when she lived the darling and sole consolation of a widowed mother, had been again awakened in her ; but there was mingled now with these emotions a tranquillizing reverence which gave dignity and stability to their character. The feeling of love, when its exciting cause is a perishable object, is ever embittered by a dash of enthusiasm, an element that can never enter into that sweet spontaneous devotion which attaches the soul to a Being we are contemplating without the intervention of the senses, and who communicates with us only from the other side of the grave. An habitual admirer of nature, to an extent which exposed her to the ridicule of many friends, Lady Butwell was in raptures this morning at the beauty of the situation of the villa they had passed the night in. The terraced garden in which it stood was bounded on the front side by a precipice filled with olive trees, whose tops, seen far below, presented a surface so yielding and feathery in appearance, as to suggest to the beholder that a fall into it would be very agreeable ; at some distance, and passing through this wood, wound the road, from the other side of which the ground, still covered with olives, fell again considerably, and continued for a considerable distance on the decline, until it reached the borders of a mountain torrent, the opposite bank of which consisted of an exquisitely-formed pile of granite, with fine effective patches of verdure on its sides, and groups of Italian firs in places where their appearance spoke volumes in favour of the attractions of the sunny but sheltered retirement in which they were destined to spend their stationary lives.

There was much of what might be termed conventional about the good of Sir Francis and his lady ; they partly loved each other because both had been brought up with a feeling of the deepest respect for the station in life to which they both belonged ; because, in every respect, Sir Francis was well-bred ; this was one reason why the lady loved : whilst Sir Francis almost revered her, chiefly because she was "every inch" a lady. Talent and good looks, though they were both sufficiently well-favoured, they neither of them minded much ; and they valued merely *natural* gifts and graces as little as a theologian does *natural* virtues ; and hence, in their eyes, people endowed with a natural dignity of deportment, for which they are notoriously not indebted to birth and training, had simply something about them which rendered them several degrees less desirable as acquaintances than those whose whole carriage was characteristic of their origin. Considering to what an incredible extent men are the creatures of prejudice, it appears to us that the less the members of one class know and see of any other, excepting in obedience to the voice of charity, which acquaints us only with the *miseries* and *sorrows* of our fellow-creatures, the less likely they are to be led from that path which has been prepared for them by Heaven to walk in during the probationary period of their existence. By their inferiors, the observers of this rule are often thought proud, but their coldness and formality have usually no more of pride in them than the same appearances in a priest, who, to obviate a dangerous familiarity on the part of his penitents, receives, as his just due, all those marks of respect which are yielded with reluctance by those only to whom the world has talked a little too acceptably. It is not wonderful that this same world should view with so little interest, and that often it should seek to turn into ridicule the attachment subsisting between married people so well matched as these two were ; inasmuch as, frequently, this attachment constitutes the sole *rotive* action of their respective wills. Considering that they were unaided by the discipline of the Catholic Church, the intercourse that had place between Sir Francis and Lady Butwell was remarkably exempt from anything morbid or inordinate. The more private their conversation, the more free it became from the spirit of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil.

"You are quite noisy this morning," said the baronet, as his wife continued her praises of the scenery and the villa.

"You must admit," was the reply,—

'This castle hath a pleasant seat ; the air
Nimble and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our general sense ;'

and I can add of it, without the help of the swallows, 'that heaven's breath smells wooingly here.'"

"I don't like this ; your merriment bedighting itself in a quotation from Macbeth is ominous. Come, 'no more of that.'"

They were joined at this moment by Sophia ; compared to whom, viewing them as worldlings, they were both mere children. Of this, Sophia was sensible herself, and although, by their excessive kindness and general good management, they had succeeded in gaining the entirety of her affections, she constantly spoke to them both in a directorial tone, as if impelled by the abundance of the sense of her own superiority as an observer of men and manners.

"Did you hear," she said to her father, "what that woman said?" Fixing her light but expressive eyes upon her father's, she kept his mind, with reference to herself, impressed with exactly the sentiments she wished him to receive, as she continued in reply to his answer in the negative, "She assured me that Valdonsella is an *impostor*."

"Depend upon it," said the mother, "the woman has been employed by some envious person to tell us this in order to prevent his marrying you."

"Oh, no," said Sophia, superciliously, "I am certain it is *true*. I care little about it ; but the man ought to be punished."

"No," said her mother, "let him go his ways, and have nothing more to say to him !"

"That would never do ; you will have him arrested," she continued to her father, whilst her eye commanded and inspired him at the same moment to resolve to lose no time in complying with her wishes."

"No punishment, I think," continued she, calmly, but in a voice denoting a great fulness of feeling upon the subject, "could be too severe for him. This kind of crime is to me much worse than murder."

"Yet we are told," said her mother, "to forgive our enemies."

"You may depend upon it," said Sir Francis, with an affectionate glance at his daughter, "I will do my utmost, and will spare no expense to bring the fellow to justice, even if he lose his head by it; and my idea is that we shall find we have been instrumental in cutting short the career of a perfect monster when we have captured him."

"*When!*" interposed Lady Butwell, incredulously, "and *what* in the meantime? Remember, we are strangers here, and, as English, disliked even by the government. This is quite unlike you, Sophy; your plan is, you know, to rest content with looking down upon people you don't respect. Oh, what more odious than vindictiveness in a woman! You will lose the respect of everybody who knows you as soon as it is understood that you are encouraging your father in his efforts to prosecute this man."

"*Mamma!*" said the daughter, imperiously, yet without violence.

"What, my child?" replied the other; "I am convinced it will be so."

"What simplicity! Is it not my glory to despise people's opinions?"

"Really, I am afraid a little too much so."

"Well, all I ask of you, mamma, is that you will leave the settlement of this affair entirely to papa and me. I am most thankful to you, papa, for your generous offer; I should be unhappy if this creature were allowed to escape the punishment his hateful conduct deserves."

For the first time in her life, Lady Butwell now became suspicious of the goodness of her daughter's heart; at the same moment, a feeling of dismay and disturbance took possession of her breast, and so influenced her countenance as to cause the daughter to exclaim with offensive asperity,

"What is the matter with you?"

"Keep a guard on yourself, Sophia, and remember that that spirit of yours is one which, without curbing, must infallibly plunge you into extravagancies."

They were silenced now by the approach of Captain Cowley, who came begging them to prolong their stay. This, however, they declined doing.

"But before we leave you," said Sir Francis, "I should be glad to have a few minutes' conversation with you."

Simon at this moment joined the ladies, whilst the fathers advanced alone.

"I have just heard," said Sir Francis, "that that man who was here yesterday, and whom you may have seen before, and understood to be an admirer of my daughter, is an impostor."

"What, the Count di Valdonsella?"

"Yes. Now," continued the speaker energetically, "when I call to mind the circumstances under which we first made his acquaintance, and which I have often related to you before, it seems to me as good as proved that our imaginary deliverer was connected with the robbers, into whose hands we had fallen, and is, perhaps, the captain of them. I have not mentioned this suspicion of mine to the ladies yet, and I mention it to you in confidence."

"It is not at all improbable that you are right. These fellows are full of tricks. I hope it isn't Carmen Festa you've got hold of. He's an awful villain."

"An enemy of this description," rejoined Sir Francis, knitting his brows and looking penetratingly, "should never be allowed to feel that you are off your guard. I shall take the initiative with him."

"Well, I'll give you what assistance I can, but I'm confident you'll never get hold of him until the Government can be piqued by some representation on the part of the British ambassador, and so forced into a line of action much more vigorous than the usual proceedings on occasions of this sort."

"Ay, but that's the very thing I'm thinking of," replied Sir Francis briskly, "and I shall request the acceptance of the police authorities of a sum of money to be offered as a reward. Suppose I say '£500.'"

"Half that sum will be more than enough for this country; and yet, when I call to mind the deep detestation in which the character of an informer is held by nearly all classes here, I hardly think it is."

"Well, then, it shall be that; and if that won't do, I'll offer £1,000. But by the way, captain, whilst we are thinking of moving heaven and earth in order to obtain our end, I suddenly bethink me that in all probability your son Willibald

can, without the slightest risk or difficulty, deliver the enemy into our hands. Where is he?"

Some years had now elapsed since Captain Cowley had had occasion to exercise his parental authority coercively; but neither father nor son had forgotten the relation in which they stood to each other, so that the liberty enjoyed by the latter had nothing in it less meritorious than one continued act of obedience.

The sudden application of Sir Francis Butwell hardly allowed to the other time for so much reflection as would have convinced him that the employment he was about to make of his authority was injudicious, to say the least of it.

Leaving his friend without stating exactly his object in so doing, he went in search of his son, thinking that by this time he must have returned. But he soon found this was not the case. Slightly out of temper at the trouble he had been put to by the vain search, his mind was the less in condition to repel the strange temptation which fastened at this moment on his imagination,—the temptation, namely, to believe that his son was no longer attached to his interests in the way in which he had been previous to his disappearance,—in consequence of his having been associating with persons during that period who had wrought a complete change in his principles. And the question occurred to him at the same time to precipitate the acceptance of the suggestion—Why else does he refuse to give any account of his proceedings during that time? With these ugly phantasies in his mind, he returned to his friend Sir Francis Butwell.

"Willibald," said he, careful that his voice and manner should reveal nothing of the current of his thoughts, "is not yet returned. But I will question him afterwards, and let you know by letter, perhaps to-night, what I gather from him."

Thus terminated the interview between the fathers, who shortly afterwards joined the rest of the party. The Butwells then took leave of the inmates of the Villa Algorouki and returned to ———.

CHAPTER XXIII.

As in the veins of Mrs. Cowley there flowed some Spanish blood, so in her character and her religion was there an element which owed its origin to her connection with a grandee of that country. Without pretending to anything like certitude in the matter, we shall venture here to predicate of the Spanish nobility and gentry, that they seem to adhere with the tenacity of veneration to a style of service which, as far as appearances are concerned, may perhaps be accounted the least meritorious of all the various ways in which the Christian may satisfy the conditions of salvation. The courteous Centurion who addressed the Prince of Peace in the first instance as a divinity rather than as a man, scarcely, perhaps, in his simplicity, condescending to regard the humanity of one he was compelled to approach with a reverence greater than that due to a ruler of the earth,—“Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word and my servant shall be healed” (what an aristocrat was this venerable Centurion, who was pained at the thought of a condescension so inordinate as that purposed to be shown him by the majestic personage he addressed!)—this Centurion, we say, whom the Church has accepted as her teacher of *manners*—for his are the words we must repeat when we approach the divine banquet of the Holy Eucharist—seems to be their *beau idéal* of a Christian, to which they obstinately cling, perhaps because it is their vocation so to do, in spite of all they hear and see of the superior virtues of the immediate disciples of our Lord and their exact imitators.

The spirit of St. Francis was utterly unintelligible to Mrs. Cowley. In her composition there was nothing of the beggar, but much of the patroness, and so strongly attached was she to the style of service she imagined herself called to, that not even her imagination was at liberty sufficient to appreciate the merits of a choice like that which her son Willibald had lately manifested. The faithful domestic, who had spoken to the latter early on the morning following the eventful night which witnessed the opening of the haunted room, had rightly guessed when she ascribed the rage and

screams of her mistress on that occasion to the influence of the devil that had erewhile held possession of that room. Observing in her dispositions an opening suited to his malignant views, this wretched spirit flew into her with the speed of thought the moment he was compelled to evacuate his old haunt in which he had dwelt so many years, solely because it was the scene of his triumph at the death of the apostate whose habit had been found by Willibald.

The lady herself was, of course, not aware of what had befallen her, nor did any one of her family or household suspect it, excepting the two already named. The wily spirit took care, in a general way, to employ the will of his victim and to use her organs in a way that rendered it almost impossible to detect his presence. It was only when very much exasperated himself by what he heard in her, and by the way in which he saw his suggestions treated, that by the sharpness of his impulses he occasioned the mysterious appearances that had so alarmed the house on the first night of his entrance.

On the day following, no one was allowed to approach the bed-side of the invalid but her husband ; on that day, shortly after the departure of the Butwells, the following conversation took place.

"Willy has returned," said the Captain; "he has been, as was suspected, to Roccalucco, and has come back more impenetrable than ever. I am afraid," continued the husband, "that the people he has associated with during his absence have filled his mind with all sorts of wrong ideas. By the way, the Conde di Valdonsella turns out to be an impostor, and Butwell is convinced he is the head of the band of robbers that set upon him when he was on his road to — from Rome. You remember how their acquaintance originated ; well, taking that into consideration and Willibald's appearing in a coat which was taken from him at that time, and knowing the men so well, what can one conclude but that he, Willibald, and the robbers are at least very well acquainted with each other. I do not like the reserve with which Willy speaks of his doings during his absence ; I have been at him about it just now. I told him that there is no higher duty than obedience, and that when I desired him to state all he knew about this man he might consider himself exonerated from the secrecy he had engaged to observe. But

what I said drew from him a quotation from some moral theology, instead of compliance with my wishes, and I soon saw that he was predetermined to resist me to any extremity. I would not, therefore, waste any more breath in expostulation, but finished with warning him against the snares of the devil."

"Did you never consider," replied the wife, in a low quick tone of voice, and as if she were giving utterance to a conviction derived from a very careful appreciation of evidence, "whence the power he exercised over the door might be derived?"

The window-curtains being drawn, the husband, who stood at the bed-side holding back the curtain that surrounded the interior, could scarcely discern the features of his wife, but her words on that very account proved the more startling. The thought he now found forming in his mind he hesitated to discover even to his wife.

"I see by your silence," said she, after a long pause, "that you have hit upon it."

Another pause intervened. The same speaker then mildly added, as if by such a tone to lessen the paradoxical aspect of the remark, "And may we not attribute to the same influence this idea of his about becoming a Franciscan?"

"I think so," replied the husband, emphatically, as if glorying in the utterance of so daring a discrimination.

At this moment, the bell, announcing the hour of the evening repast, put an end to the conversation. Leaving his wife to be entertained by the malignant spirit that had embedded himself in her will, he descended to the room where he was to be joined by his sons. The room was spacious and highly-decorated. The ceiling exhibited a fresco by Salvator Rosa, so, at least, tradition said, though the rarity of performances in this style by that painter rendered it difficult to *conoscenti* to believe the evidence of their eyes as they recognised the unmistakable characteristics of his pencil. There were several other good paintings in the room: two remarkably fine landscapes by Berghen, and three historical landscapes by that true genius Nicholas Poussin. At each corner of the saloon appeared a piece of sculpture, in which there was striking evidence of an exact appreciation of the unapproachable cleverness of nature. But few additions had

been made to the collection either of sculptures or paintings of late, for these things were beginning to be regarded in the light of furniture solely by all the inmates of the house. The Eden era of their lives was now on the wane; their tranquillity had been interrupted, and an agitation had begun within, which, however, had hitherto done little more than diminish their taste for the fine arts.

The suspicion which was constantly striking its roots more deeply into the heart of Captain Cowley threw its blighting shade over the spirit of Willibald, in the form of a cautious, unsympathizing way of speaking, accompanied by a look which painfully informed the son that he was gradually acquiring the aspect of a stranger in the eyes of his own father.

In the space of about a quarter of an hour, during which little had been said, excepting what had reference to the provisions before them, Willibald turned confidently to his father, and said, "One of my occupations during my absence I *can* mention to you; it was thinking of home. Though absent in body, I was nearly always present here in thought."

"You had better observe silence," replied the father, coolly. "Had your disappearance resulted from anything but your own choice, we should be willing to think as you wish us to do."

Although, in obedience to his father's injunction, he preserved silence, an expression of filial love, accompanied by indications of a wish to be more communicative, and of an inclination to smile at the mystification to which he was compelled to subject his father, did much more than words could have effected towards restoring the valued confidence his fidelity towards Carmen had lost for him. The father remained only ten minutes at the supper-table. Simon saw into his brother's heart, and, at this time, could almost read the secret that gave rise in others to so much uneasiness, and he took every opportunity of testifying the continuation of his love by constantly telling him news. "By the bye," said he, as soon as they were alone, "I have not yet told you anything about Cecilia Bianconi. The instant you disappeared she declared it was not *your own* doing—that she was quite convinced you had been either killed or taken prisoner by robbers. She quite irritated us by the importu-

nateness with which she endeavoured to make us take the same view of the subject."

"Is she still in the world," said Willibald, in a low tone.

"Yes; and she always tells us she don't mean to leave it till she hears of your escape from it. She says she and you are mysteriously tied together—that you are a sort of spiritual Siamese twins. She has prayed enough for you, I'll be bound. All this, she says, is because you were the first person to disgust her with the world. Of course she is laughed at a good deal for talking thus, but she is really a warm-hearted creature, and I think you cannot do better than make her an offer."

"I love her too well. Nothing would disturb me more than to see her united to any human being, but chiefly to myself, because, if it were myself, I should feel as though I were a devil running off with an angel, out of spite to God."

"I don't admire this sort of love. If you are not thinking of marrying a person, you ought not to indulge in any feeling of preference for her to anybody else."

"I merely love her," replied Willibald, calmly, "because she loves God so much."

"How do you know she does?"

"Because she always kindles in me the same fire of divine love."

"Oh, I like that!" and the generous rival continued, with glowing looks, "Don't you remember what Bartholomew de Martyribus says about divine love?"

"If the love I am speaking of were of this nature, I should be frequently wanting to see or to write to Cecilia; whereas I don't care whether I see her again during my whole life, much less should I be disturbed were she to die to-morrow."

"Then why do you say you would not have her marry? You are like the dog in the manger."

"No; because it is not out of ill-nature or greediness that I look after her with such a jealous eye, but because the Master wants her."

Willibald here changed the subject of the conversation by remarking on the beauty of the sky. Their meal being now at end, he proposed strolling out on the terrace. Simon ran and procured cigars, and the brothers then sauntered out on the terrace.

"I shall never be able to believe, Willibald, that you are called to the religious state ; you are so different a person from every priest or religious I know, excepting one or two, who had much better have married. It is clear you are made both to love and to be loved. I often envy your power of enamouring women with you. Either Cecilia or Sophia Butwell would do for me, yet I can't make the slightest impression on either of them. I shall begin soon to think it is I who have the vocation, if either of us have."

"Perhaps," replied Willibald, "we both have."

"I hope I have not. I am so fond of gardening, and painting, and reading, and scribbling, that methinks I could scarcely attend to my religious duties, in a proper spirit, without them. They keep me in a good humour, and enrich my heart, which is so barren a soil, naturally, that the flowers of devotion would never bloom there, without the aid of such manure. If it hadn't been for these things during your absence, I don't know what I should have done. One of my occupations, lately, has been the composing a full and particular account of the creation, occupation, extent, natural history, and present condition of this estate. I was determined to do the thing in a way which should render my work a perfect specimen of this very humble branch of literature ; therefore, have had to make many inquiries in a variety of directions. I have been to villages the existence of which neither of us knew anything of before ; and in — I have become acquainted with personages who, but for this undertaking of mine, would have lived and died as far below the horizon of my experience as the antipodes."

The brothers had insensibly wandered beyond the terrace, and got round to that side of the villa which faced the low, but finely-formed mountains, from the summit of one of which rose the mysterious tower of the old castle, faintly tinged now with the dusty rays of the fast-declining sun. The same in all respects as it had appeared to them from their infancy there it still stood—still dreaming on, as if destined, like the slumbering Rip Van Winkle, to revive and tell a tale to a future and remote generation, in which nought would be said of innumerable intervening events, not less important as links to other histories.

"During my researches," resumed Simon, "I have con-

stantly been reminded of our attempts to reach the walls of that charming abode,—for charming any place must be which has for many generations been left unmolested by any save such peaceable tenants as nature sends. What a veneration the brute creation seems to have for man—and a *love*, too, though accompanied by mistrust and resentfulness! These creatures seem to feel towards us as the Americans do towards the mother country. The most rapacious of ‘the feathered tribe’ excuse this flourish—evinced a preference, as a situation for their nests, for anything built by human hands to the vastnesses of nature, in which for them there is no similar trace of the Master Mind that we worship. I don’t feel at all that we annoy birds when we frighten them by a visit to a ruin they tenant. So that for me the words,—

‘The moping owl doth to the moon complain,’—

have no charm, because no significance; the idea being altogether arbitrary. I am sure they like us to draw near, though, so long as we remain, they eye us suspiciously—exactly as we should a visitant from the other world, as, with our hair standing on end, we lay gazing on him warming himself at the fire in our room.”

“I have often felt the same thing,” replied Willibald, “with regard to many persons I meet and see as perfect strangers. However repulsive, or shy, or forbidding, their looks may be, I always discern a latent expression of love, which, if you attentively consider it, points to a future state of universal reconciliation and friendship. Is it possible that nothing is known to anybody living of the early history of a castle so well situated and so extensive as that evidently is?”

“There are some lawyers in —,” replied Simon, “who are said to possess documents throwing much light on its early as well as its more recent history. But I was recommended not to make myself known to these men, who are of such a scheming, plotting turn, that your only security against annoyance of some sort from them is their entire ignorance of your existence; though it is also said that they have at their fingers’ ends the history of everybody in the kingdom of —, foreign as well as native; in short, I was given to understand,” continued Simon, lowering his voice, and looking cautiously around, “that they are the agents and

the allies of a band of robbers and bravos, whose services they can command in return for assistance rendered in their line. It is said that many assassinations have formed items in their accounts, and been paid for by their clients."

Remembering Carmen's frequent visits to —, the soul of Willibald almost started from his flesh as he listened to these words. With the utmost difficulty he turned the groan into a sigh that the thought of this wickedness elicited. Then came a disturbance within him similar to what he would properly have experienced had he been really implicated as a partizan of these children of Belial. The recollection of his intimacy with the man of blood, who might be the leader of the very band his brother alluded to, violently tempted him to imagine himself a participator in his guilt; this feeling even went so far as to cause marks of embarrassment to appear in his face, though they were alone; but, quickly recovering himself, he coolly replied with the words of Shakspeare:—

"Be sure, at least, of this, that—

'There are more things in heaven and earth
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.'

At this moment the thought began to steal into the mind of the speaker that the ruin now before him might be the very castle in which he had been confined during the last year. Whilst light yet remained, however insufficient, he strained his eyes upon the fading outline, in the hopes of ascertaining at once whether any similarity of form or colour could be traced between the two; but the rapidly-increasing gloom left him in uncertainty, though with a very strong predisposition to think that this could be nothing else than his recent prison-house. In this mind he turned to his brother, and said cheerfully,—

"Don't you remember how we used almost to *sigh* after admission into those mysterious walls?—how, whilst watching the hawk-infested tower, we used almost to exclaim, '*Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes.*' Such prayers are surely profane, though they are so apt to be made a boast of as indicating a spirit ill-assorted with existing circumstances."

"In other words, a poetical disposition."

"Even so. The longing which is given us for heaven

must be terribly misapplied when directed towards such a triviality as a mere change of scene. But we were then, I suppose, in leading-strings, 'which make ambition virtue,' restraining, to encourage, progress."

The motionless outline of the stately villa, contrasting imposingly in its stillness with the spangled darkness that glowed around, as if with difficulty dethroning the blaze of light that had erewhile reigned in its place with such abounding liberty, was the picture that the brothers had to contemplate as they turned from the mountainous scene which had slid now beneath the curtain of the night. They admired the figure of this edifice with a steady vehemence, which showed that they had scarcely lost the childish habit of making a merit of this preference. Here we were born! was the feeling which united their hearts at that moment, and therefore we ought to love and to admire this beautiful villa more than any place in the world!

Simon had been hoping his brother would communicate to him some of the particulars of his conference with Father Faliuja, but their conversation this evening was interrupted by the bell for night prayers before anything had been said upon that interesting topic. It is remarkable that no allusion had yet been made by either of the brothers to the events of the preceding evening. Simon had remained silent, because he conceived it became him to do so; though he had not yet become quite decided as to the view he should take of an occurrence which, though supernatural, seemed to have no heavenly grace about it. No member of the household had dared enter even the first of the suite of apartments, at the end of which was the haunted room, since the opening of the door; and when, the night prayers being finished, the servants had to ascend to their respective bedrooms, they could not have felt more reluctance to do so had the upper part of the house been visibly thronging with evil spirits. No sleep again to-night in the Villa Algorouki.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE feelings of all when they met on the following morning were wholly unlike what, under other circumstances, they would have been at that cheerful hour, and with Willibald in the house. Rather unexpectedly, just as the family were entering the chapel to say morning prayers, Father Falioja made his appearance, and so mass was said instead. Mrs. Cowley could not attend, and Captain Cowley was not in condition, as he was wont to be on such occasions, to go to holy communion; in short, none of the household went that morning, except Willibald. When mass was over, and the priest, the father, and the two sons, had breakfasted in silence, Captain Cowley drew the priest aside, and spoke as follows:—

“Did not Willibald visit you yesterday?”

“He did.”

“You are acquainted, then, with what took place here on Wednesday afternoon?”

“You allude to the door of the room opening of its own accord when Willibald approached?”

“Exactly. It is in reference to that that I now wish to speak to you. We have made out, you must know first, that your conjecture about Willibald being detained by robbers was correct. But the most distressing part of the business is that, during his detention, he has been seduced, by the example and conversation of the miscreants with whom he has associated, so far as to be still evidently sympathizing with them, and more one of them than of ourselves; in so far, that I feel that it is nothing but the scanty remains of his filial affection and gratitude on which we can safely rely as a security against the machination of his companions.”

“My dear friend,” replied Father Falioja to this, “you are labouring under a terrible delusion.”

Captain Cowley had a difficulty in sufficiently curbing the indignation aroused in him by these words to be able to clothe it in polite language:—

"How can you say so, father, before you have heard my reasons for thinking as I do? But, since Willibald retains you as his counsel on this occasion, it will be wiser in me, perhaps, to remain silent."

"I am simply of opinion that your son is called by God to enter the Franciscan order."

The captain shrank visibly from the speaker of these words, and eyed him with an expression so mixed as to be hardly describable. Contempt and mistrust formed the prevailing elements, but fear and reverence were not wholly absent, though fast assuming the hue of conceit.

"You," exclaimed he, with an air intended to savour of pleasantry, and which had a dash of vulgarity about it suited to his words,—“you, I see, are regularly in for it.”

Father Fatioja smiled, but made no reply. His companion now excused himself, and re-entered the house, leaving the friar alone with his office-book.

The captain betook himself instantly to his wife.

"Willibald," said he, "has completely hoodwinked Father Fatioja. Will you believe it? He would not even give me an opportunity of telling him what we are so certain about. To what but satanic agency can it be attributable? Would the Almighty bestow such marks of distinction on the companion and ally of robbers?—and yet this is what Father Fatioja imagines has taken place."

We refrain from depicting the scene which followed. It will suffice to inform the reader that a devil only could have dictated the abuse that Mrs. Cowley now heaped upon Father Fatioja. And from this time forward the wrath occasioned by Willibald's resistance of her wishes was transferred to the clergy generally, all of whom, by her assumption, were constantly represented by the single one who was most frequently in her company. Her husband confined his resentment principally to Willibald himself. But the events of the preceding night had wrought a considerable change in the nature even of his feelings. He thought no better of his son, but he feared him more, and had begun to think of assuming a more submissive manner, in order to conciliate a power he could no longer control. These humiliating cogitations were interrupted by the entrance of a servant bringing a note from Sir Francis Butwell. It ran thus:—

"DEAR COWLEY,—Try and find out, through your son, whether the old castle we were admiring so much when we were with you is inhabited by robbers. He *must* know. Perhaps you will be able to send an answer by the bearer. It is very important that this point should be ascertained at once.

"Yours truly,

"FRANCIS BUTWELL."

The tone of this note revived the courage of the gallant captain, who had been subdued by supernatural rather than human agency, so that when the voice of one united to a powerful nucleus of human beings reminded him of the strength of his allies, he was ready again to assume his parental authority, and summoning Willibald, questioned him boldly to elicit the information desired. Willibald's habitual glance was at once comprehensive in its aspect, penetrating, gentle, and retiring. He seemed ever afraid of seeing too much, but looked at the same time as if he couldn't help understanding everything. Thus he was unable to suppress a smile as, with a look provokingly mysterious, he replied, "This, my dear father, is one of the questions which I must beg of you to excuse my answering."

"Willibald," replied the father, with an air of solemnity suited to the thought he was about to express—with the confidence of a true prophet—"you will ruin your whole family by this humour of yours. I am sure of it. All respectable people will soon cease to entertain feelings of confidence and esteem towards the parents of one who is, to all intents and purposes, afraid to serve the state against a common enemy. What will Sir Francis Butwell say when I inform him of your obstinacy? Of course, after a time I shall be identified with you; and when he returns to England, it will be the Cowleys did this, and the Cowleys did that, when, in truth, you alone should be alluded to."

As Willibald's eyes, with a most benignant expression, were answering as fast as he spoke, in a way which showed him that he spoke in vain, the father would not allow him to reply at this moment. "Do not answer," he continued, "till you have thought further of what I have said. Reflection may lead to a salutary change in your sentiments."

Two hours were allowed to elapse before the father went again in search of his son.

But now Willibald was nowhere to be found. Sir Francis Butwell's servant was detained until it was thought imprudent to delay him longer. He then took with him the subjoined reply to Sir Francis Butwell :—

“DEAR BUTWELL,—My boy has been away all day. When he returns, I will endeavour to draw from him the information you want.

“Yours, &c.,

“W. COWLEY.”

As soon as the servant was dispatched, the search was renewed ; but to no purpose.

It had always been remarkable that people who admired the Villa Algorouki, and longed to remain there during the early part of the day, invariably changed their language towards the close of day : all its attractions seemed blotted out by darkness, and then it was felt to be hideously desolate and unfit to be the abode of human beings. Priests, pilgrims, and very holy persons, seemed not to dislike this gloom, though they admitted there were grounds for the complaint urged against it by others. Once upon a time, too, the Cowleys had encountered it courageously enough, and rather enjoyed the exercise of faith it demanded every night ; but their trials had now commenced.

Fear seized every heart, and made each member of the household vigilant during all the early part of the night. From conversation on the following morning, it was found that all had thought much about Willibald, and had derived from this thought something of that sort of comfort that young people who are “afraid of thieves” usually experience on reflecting that there is a watchman not far off. Mrs. Cowley seemed quite herself on the following morning. She wept a good deal upon finding that her son had not yet returned, and upbraided herself for having thought him capable of acting the part of a robber's provider.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE energy Sir Francis Butwell had displayed as a public man in his native land, the fact of his being still in Parliament, and a partisan of the existing ministry, invested him, in the eyes of the British ambassador, with a greater importance than was attached to almost any Englishman who spent the winter of the year—at ———.

We have already mentioned that the "Conde di Valdonsella," long before the arrival of the Butwells, had, by studying the prejudices of the Protestant English, contrived to pass in their eyes for a highly respectable personage. This means that he was not classed by them with those of the ——— fashionables whom they despised the more because they were all known to and respected by one another, but held to be in every way more worthy than the latter, because, with themselves, he seemed to find no satisfaction in their society. His reserve resulted, in their estimation, from self-respect, and his peculiar habits from a greatness of mind, that caused him soon to nauseate the frivolities his love of the human race and his gallantry induced him occasionally to countenance. But when, after the arrival of the Butwells, it was gradually observed that the Conde was paying his addresses to Miss Butwell, a different and more critical view of his character and pretensions began to be taken. Both he and the Butwells suffered in their estimation by seeming to be so well pleased with each other.

Neither Sir Francis, his lady, nor Sophia, were aware of this. There was a formality about them which kept them in a state of mental isolation, even in relation to those with whom they were on visiting terms, insomuch that they lived, when from home, in utter ignorance of all impressions regarding their own reputation, excepting such as could be expressed by outward gestures and drawing-room conversation, which is so apt to be credited for a depth of signification which never belongs to it.

Under these circumstances, the ambassador, whose intimacy with members of the government enabled him to form a still more correct estimate of the Conde's worth as a member of

society, was rather pleased than distressed by his friend's announcement of the discovery he had just made. It afforded him an opportunity, too, of saying enough to increase Sir Francis's eagerness to be the means of laying bare to all Europe the roguery of which he had been the dupe, and the truth in its whole length and breadth regarding a man who had shone so long and so brightly as a lie. The ambassador, too, took fire as he listened to the energetic language of his respected friend, and in a short time, when the circumstance had become more generally known among the English, their resentment and excitement could not have been greater, had it been found at the same time that the impostor was an *employé* of the government, to the end that, by tricking one, he might be the means of drawing ridicule upon all protected by the British flag.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A Letter from SOPHIA BUTWELL to EMILY WORTLEY.

"DEAREST EMILY,—I hasten to tell you that I have recently got engaged in an entirely new pursuit. The end, it is true, is still conquest, but another power of the soul is exercised to obtain it, one which has hitherto lain dormant in my breast, but which, on being roused, turns out to be as entertaining a familiar quite as the old thing, which has hitherto monopolized all my attention. I am so amused when I think of it! Your friend El Conde turns out to be no less a personage than the redoubted Carmen Festa, the bandit of whom I have spoken already, in disguise!!! Don't you think it a thing altogether distinguishing to have exhibited the power to lull the savage breast and soften rocks? Mind you dwell on this point well when you hear anybody talking irreverently of me, as of course all will at first; I don't care a rush, therefore, for the trick that has been played upon me, but the impudence is not, on that account, to be allowed to go unpunished. Carmen knows too much of me, and I of him, for that. Crush the worm at once, that has dared approach in a serpent's skin, or it will never let you rest. But this worm

has the teeth and the wings of a dragon. The nature of the pursuit I spoke of just now will now be intelligible to you : papa's intimacy with the British Ambassador here enables us to make use of the influence of that functionary in order to induce the government to take the matter in hand, and you will see, before long, a letter in the *Times*, '*from our own correspondent*,' which is intended to expose to the whole of Europe the corrupt state of society in this country ; showing, at the same time, how the power of evil-doers is amplified by the criminal forbearance which the state exercises towards them at the instance of the clergy, who are known to be on terms of infamous intimacy with them, and, for reasons best known to themselves, to associate with them in preference to persons of stricter morals. Mention is made in the same letter of a young Englishman whom the clergy are endeavouring to get hold of, that the property to which he is heir may, by his receiving orders, be converted into church property. We have had singular opportunities for seeing how things go on here. I mentioned to you some time ago that Willibald Cowley (who is the young man in question) and Carmen knew each other. All is now intelligible enough. This monster has been employed by the clergy (it is thought by a body of Franciscan Friars, who outwardly profess to live on alms, but really and truly have estates, which laymen hold for them) to entrap him. The tour to Palestine turns out to be a mere tale told to the idiots, his parents, as papa suspected, merely to lull suspicion on his first disappearance, he having all the while been in the custody of Carmen, who has obtained such an influence over him, that though he is the only honest man in Italy at this moment who knows aught of the haunts of Carmen, and could give serviceable information about him to the police, nothing can induce him, not even parental authority, to say a word of that import. The sight of so much wickedness is enough to make one turn serious ; you may notice how the tone of my letter alters for the better as I describe it. I have always thought we are more assisted by bad examples than good, and I now begin to experience the truth of this observation.

"Yours, &c.,

"SOPHIA BUTWELL."

CHAPTER XXVII.

*Another Letter from SOPHIA BUTWELL to EMILY WORTLEY,
which should be read.*

"DEAREST EMILY,—A little while ago how I should have detested all this publicity. To be alluded to in a leading article in the *Times* would have been an intolerable annoyance; but, latterly, an extraordinary change has taken place in my tastes. I quite enjoy the hubbub now, and listen to the daily accounts we get from the police of their progress with a zest similar to that with which a fox-hunter overcomes the various little difficulties that are thrown in his way by the different dodges of the fox. I'm sure I must be endowed with a very large organ of destructiveness. My desire to behold my late admirer in durance vile is much more vehement than any other passion I was ever possessed by; and yet, strange—passing strange it is, it must be admitted—I love him as well now as ever I did, so that whilst I sit talking with papa about the chances there are of our ultimately succeeding in capturing him, I am almost tempted to exclaim, with Othello, 'Excellent wretch, perdition catch my soul, but I do love thee,' ending, however, rather differently,—therefore do I long to catch thee, and trim thee, and then hang thee. He would have been in the hands of the police long ago, but for the cowardice of the people here, whose love of money is only surpassed by their love of life. The impression is that an informer would inevitably be assassinated, even if he were to leave the country. When you combat this latter proposition, representing that by changing his name and going to England or America he would at once satisfy and disappoint their vengeance, you are told that a ——— can track a ——— anywhere, and that he would travel round the world, with his eyes shut to everything else but the footprints, after a fugitive from his vengeance, though, in a general way, he shrinks with dismay from the pictures drawn by the admirer of Captain Cook, and never travels but as an exile.

"I mentioned to you in my last that some Franciscan friars had employed Carmen to entrap Willibald Cowley;

this came to light on the seizure of an old castle which has been the haunt of banditti for ages, and inaccessible, excepting to persons conversant with a secret not publicly known to this day, by which the robbers were enabled to pass an impenetrable thicket that encompassed the castle to the extent of two miles in the diameter. The traces of recent occupation appeared in every direction, but the police could find nobody on the premises but a Franciscan friar, who would give them no information regarding the captain of the band to which he belonged, and who only accidentally divulged the fact that Willibald Cowley had been a prisoner of theirs during the whole of the period of his recent mysterious absence. Taking this circumstance in connection with Willibald's extravagant desire to become a friar himself, manifested especially subsequently to his return home, is it not as clear as your skin is, that the Franciscans have ensnared this soul, that *they* are chargeable with all the criminality of this abduction? I have now to inform you that when, in compliance with a suggestion from us, the British Ambassador represented to the government that this Franciscan ought not to be allowed to slip so easily through their fingers, seeing that it was pretty evident he was the accomplice, and perhaps the virtual leader, of the robbers; he was told that such a proceeding was quite out of the question, it being evident that the Franciscan had been a prisoner himself, and was no otherwise connected with the robbers than Cowley had been. But a more circumstantial account of this affair will soon reach you in the columns of the *Times*, for which, as from 'our own correspondent,' papa is now drawing it up. I have observed to him, and he will introduce here my thoughts, that the clergy, by means of the practice of auricular confession and other institutions, have the same power over society here that the lawyers have in England, who, by playing into each other's hands, render it impossible for any man who has once given one of them his confidence to regain a state of independence. As in England the greatest, the queen herself, is constantly in need of a legal adviser, and thus becomes dependent upon the mind of another for all she does agreeably to the conscience of this adviser, for we may very fairly affirm that the law is the conscience of a lawyer; so, here, is the king fettered by the

dictum of a priest, who represents the whole body of the clergy. What then, you will say, *are* the clergy? where is their kingdom? where their estate, their place of recreation or of retirement, where they may have time to contemplate their own achievements and plan future victories? Ah, my dear child, have you never heard of the Court of Rome—of the Prince of this world and his high places? I never see a priest that I do not think of the devil, in whose existence I should scarcely believe, were it not for the unearthly aspect of these incarnations. The next thing we shall hear will be, perhaps, that Carmen was once in holy orders. The devil is evidently much busier here than in England. I mentioned to you what happened at the villa Algorouki; mamma is getting half possessed; Mrs. Cowley is not right yet, so one of our servants tells me who is intimate with one of hers.

“I hardly ever play now; I am getting so much more intellectual than I was. You will find me next, I suppose, in three volumes, without a name, but making a tremendous sensation. Setting the world to rights is really glorious fun, a thousand times more so than playing people into ecstasies. In whatever I may write there will be a good deal of religion, as I find *that* is my *forte* now, instead of the *piano*. In polemics I am getting so strong that I should not be at all afraid now of Willibald Cowley.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OUR nature is so constructed that, with the finest intellect and the greatest amount of experience and intelligence, we are nearly always forced to yield to the impulse of a blind feeling, and act from that rather than in simple obedience to a dictate of reason, where our position subjects us to a strong moral opposition, which, nevertheless, it belongs to us to overcome; unless the dictates of our reason are but the language of our faith as Catholics. Hence, most of the measures adopted by English ministers in great emergencies, though they seem to be the result of the most mature deliberation, are generally suggested by a pride which is common to

the vast majority of the community, who, therefore, applaud with extraordinary energy, if the measure is to their liking, and are equally vehement in the expression of contempt for the unhappy minister, when it seems to be opposed to their interests or to compromise the honour of the nation. A vast importance is, therefore, constantly being attached in this world of delusions to the successes of mere selfish cunning, whilst the triumphs of the children of God, over the ministers of Satan, are thought of only to be expelled with loathing from the mind.

Sir Francis Butwell was eminently, in point of character, a growth of the soil of English society; that is, he was eminently *public-spirited*—the creature, that is to say, of public opinion; so that he was ever ready to sacrifice to this idol, if the demand were made, the dearest friend he had. On reading Captain Cowley's reply to his note, he had considered but a few moments, and then resolved that he would make an example of Willibald. In an instant all his sympathies had been withdrawn from him, and in the letter from "our own correspondent" alluded to by Sophia, in her letter to Emily Wortley, he spoke of him, and his conduct on this occasion, in the following manner:—

"We are sorry to have to record that an English family, which has been long settled in this neighbourhood, having unfortunately imbibed the superstition occupying the place of religion in the hearts of the natives of Italy, has gradually come to participate in its demoralizing effects. Captain Cowley, R.N., purchased, in the year —, the celebrated country residence known as the Villa Algorouki, and has resided there with his family ever since. His eldest son, now upwards of twenty years of age, had the misfortune, or the infatuation, to get kidnapped about a year ago by the banditti. Though strongly advised by his friends to take measures for his recovery, adapted to the presumed position of his son, Captain Cowley, persisting in the preposterous assumption, that the young man had secretly left the paternal roof solely with the view of performing a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, allowed a whole year to elapse in inaction; when his son returned under circumstances singularly, nay providentially, significant of the truth, that the whole of that period had been spent by him in the society of an organized body of

thieves, cut-throats, and outlaws. The young man himself has made every effort, short of the utterance of a deliberate falsehood, to impress inquirers in the way which such an utterance would have done less successfully ; but his conduct, since his return, painfully satisfies all interested about him as to the true nature of his conversation during the period of his absence. He has shown himself beneath the paternal roof quite an altered being ; an admixture of the wolf, startlingly foreign to his former character, has crept into his disposition. Even must his brother hesitate to treat him with the confidence that formerly, we are assured, was as complete as it is now impracticable ; and though highly blamable for an unaccountable weakness, which seems to wink at all these frightful symptoms of a deep internal perversion, his parents have not been able to shut their eyes to the unmistakable evidence of a continued sympathy in their son with his recent associates, and dare not look upon him, at present, in any other light than that of a spy. The most unequivocal proof of this secret complicity which has yet come to the knowledge of his friends is, his recent second disappearance, under the following circumstances :—No sooner had the gendarmerie been made to feel, by the serious tone of the order from the government for the apprehension of Carmen Festa, as well as by the reward offered by Sir Francis Butwell as an inducement to energetic conduct on this occasion, that it was in all ways their interest to succeed in the enterprise, than information was advertised for, as a *sine quâ non*, touching the manner of gaining admittance to a certain ruin, not far distant from the Villa Algorouki, which has for centuries lain in an unapproachable condition, owing to a wide-spread and densely-tangled coppice of cactus, prickly pear, thorn, briar, nettle, and brushwood surrounding it. Till this time it was generally supposed that the place was uninhabited, but it is suspected now to be a stronghold of the robbers, who, people say, enter it by a subterraneous passage, the outer entrance to which has now to be found. Being intimately acquainted with the family of Captain Cowley, and familiar with some of the facts just related, though not with the full extent of the change that had taken place in his disposition, Sir Francis Butwell wrote to his friend the Captain, requesting him to draw from his son the information required. He was told, in

reply, that after refusing to comply with his father's request, the son had left the house, obviously with the view of giving information in an opposite direction. Since that time he has not re-appeared. Previously, and since his return, he had talked much of becoming a Franciscan friar. What was meant by this came to light when, after incredible difficulty, having cut a way through the surrounding brushwood, the police succeeded in gaining admittance to the old castle just spoken of. The Franciscans in this part of Italy, as all the world knows, are both the most numerous and the most depraved of the numerous religious orders. An order expressly founded in honour of the evils of ignorance and pauperism, cannot but be the resort of base-born, ignorant, and thievish beings; begging and thieving were the practices which distinguished the early years of its founder, and we must not be surprised to find that the children only cease to imitate their father when they lose his spirit by becoming rich. The men of refinement and education, wearing the same habit, who are sometimes found in the most polished circles at Rome, have, in effect, left the order; the true Franciscan must be sought in regions similar to that in which one was found by the police on entering the castle. The traces of a long and recent occupation by a numerous body of men appeared in every direction. The expiring embers of fires used for cooking, with remnants of provisions, and nearly fifty bedsteads, afforded glaring evidence of the nature of the use to which this castle had been put to within a day of the present time; but all the inhabitants were fled, excepting an old Friar Tuck, who was found hiding in a turret. He had evidently been left to make signs from thence, but on being seized he pretended he was only a prisoner,—an assertion which was falsified in the next minute by his refusing to give information regarding the people by whom he had been recently surrounded. He said he was not there for that object, but to save souls; he ought to have added, and necks too. He said other things, reported by the police, who, blinded by their religious prejudices, were so foolish as to leave him where they found him. The government, too, though our ambassador has pointed out the mistake, seems indisposed to follow his suggestion, and even ventures to hint at the possibility of the statement made by the friar being true, as, they aver, it was,

according to theology, perfectly natural and proper—language indicating the endless evils which are liable to result from the prevalence, as a national belief, of a fanaticism like that of Popery.”

In due time the newspaper in which this letter made its appearance, in that bold, dry, stereo-like type which is usually selected for articles intended to create a great “sensation,” reached the Villa Algorouki.

During the two months which had elapsed since the events related in Chapter XII., little intercourse had taken place between the Butwells and the Cowleys. The latter, indeed, had become almost insensible to the existence of any society beyond the walls of their own domicile. Mrs. Cowley had become melancholy and peevish. Her prevailing impression regarding the cause of the disappearance and absence of her son, had been that prelatical influences were undermining those of parental authority. The suspicions she had once shared with her husband had long since fled from her mind, and she had gradually allowed a feeling of contempt for him to be generated within her heart by his continued indulgence in fancies which seemed to her more indicative of his own base uncharitableness than the least likely to be true. Consequently, on reading the letter just quoted, her first impression was, that he had communicated his notions to Sir Francis Butwell, and so had indirectly been the originator of the injurious statements it contained. “There is not a word of truth in your charge,” replied Captain Cowley, in his own defence, when, in the bitterest terms of resentment, his wife assailed him. “Whatever I may have feared, I could never have communicated to such a person as Sir Francis Butwell thoughts which, in any mind but that of a father, could scarcely fail, sooner or later, to ferment into some such offensive explosion as this.”

Nothing so readily frees our minds from a delusion as the contemplation of its pernicious effects on another; so that, although indignant as his wife at the sight of this letter, the perusal of it was most serviceable to the father, by diminishing considerably the force of the disposition to think that his son was not sincere in the expression of a predilection for the religious state.

“Butwell,” exclaimed he, “had no sort of right to make

any allusion to Willibald. But it is ever thus with men who constitute the state, or the press, their confessor and director. They make a merit of communicating to it their rashest judgments of those fellow-creatures whom they do not see in it. An injury is inflicted on Willibald's name by this letter which nothing will be able to repair, because, if all the facts were shown to be misrepresentations, the idea of the character they must necessarily convey will remain in the public mind so long as the man himself remains personally a stranger to each member of that public."

Mrs. Cowley's indignation with the writer of the letter knew no bounds. For though his disappearance, which she regarded as indicative of his determination to set her wishes at defiance by embracing at once the religious state, had added much to the irritation his previous conduct had given rise to, this letter, showing the ruin of his name complete, which, in her estimation, his own resistance of her wishes was drawing upon it, presented itself to her judgment, now, solely in the light of a flagitious, though unanswerable, lie. She vowed a Butwell should never again come beneath her roof, and wrote to Lady Butwell in a strain so violent, yet incoherent, that that lady would not venture to make a reply. She, however, remonstrated with Sir Francis, and pointed out to him the possibility of his having been mistaken in his estimation of Willibald's motive for withdrawing. But here the public spirit—not his own spirit—was to answer. What I have written, said he gravely, I have written: and his wife knew then that her rival, the world, was at work with his understanding as well as his will. Sophia said nothing at the time, because she had assisted her father, by occasional suggestions, in the making out of his case; but from the first she had tacitly disapproved of his manner of speaking of Willibald, in whom she could still only see what excited in her a feeling of indescribable interest; and it was always her intention, ultimately, to give her father's thoughts upon this subject another turn: but at present he was behaving so well—so much to her mind—in the gross, that she could not bring herself to find fault with details.

In the mean time the robbers did not suffer the grass to grow under their feet; so that the officers of justice, after a campaign of about three months, returned empty-handed, and

wholly averse to a continuation of the pursuit, from an idea that Carmen Festa had left the kingdom. This unsatisfactory termination of his enterprise gave rise of course to another letter, in which was set forth, in sententious generalizations, how all the might of England would become as a dream in the hands of Italians, or any people—like, for instance, the Spaniards—who had long been under the stupefying influence of the Catholic religion. Catholicity, said he, has ever shown itself a bully or a coward.

It was time now for the Butwells to return to their native country, and when they left —, there was scarcely a creature there who did not rejoice. From the king to the lazaroni, there was not a soul, not even an English soul, who had not become heartily sick of the sight of their carriage, or the figure, with his censorious countenance, of Sir Francis as he walked or rode through the town. They left, too, without making any attempt to become reconciled with the Cowleys.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THAT it had, as it were, shut the door of the world in his face—this it was that chiefly incensed Mrs. Cowley when she considered more narrowly the tendency of the letter in which her son's conduct was animadverted upon so trenchantly by Sir F. Butwell; because, in doing this, it aided that detested party who, as she suspected, were, in conscious opposition to her wishes, using every means that lay in their power to "reduce" her son to the ranks of religion.

"This is the consequence," said she, "of forming acquaintances, and becoming intimate with Protestants. Being in the power of the devil, they naturally act according to his designs when he wishes to do you an injury."

The character of Mrs. Cowley had latterly undergone a change which occasioned her worthy husband more anxiety than Willibald's disappearance or Sir Francis's treachery. Imperious by nature, she had yet, hitherto, because under the influence of the grace of God and of love of her husband, been playfully, and never actually, imperious, and thus her

fault was converted into a charm ; but now she was uniformly grave, and seemed to make a merit of obeying implicitly the dictates of her own self-will. She seemed to have lost the power of seeing when she transgressed in this particular, and met, with extraordinary readiness and asperity of manner, every attempt—the smallest approach to an attempt, on the part of her husband—to make her sensible of the error to which she was committed in seizing the *sceptre*, whereas a *crown* alone marks the wife's share of the domestic throne. Possessing himself, in the highest degree, all the virtues of a husband, he was perplexed in the extreme when he became fully convinced that any steady opposition could not be persevered in without driving his wife mad, or causing her to wander from her home in the vain hope of finding in a treacherous world a happier and safer asylum. At last, however, recollecting that wives, by their meekness, have frequently subdued the ferocity of tyrant husbands, he asked himself why he should not make trial for a while of the same weapon. It was whilst under the influence of the determination to make this experiment that he still found it impossible for him to allow some of his wife's observations about the clergy to pass unopposed. On one occasion, after a conversation about the Butwells, she said,—

“ But worse, a thousand times worse, are the wretches who have taken him from us ! ”

“ You cannot, my dear, say so,” expostulated mildly her companion.

“ Leave the house ! ” was the reply : “ and, mark me, before another year is passed over your head, this place shall be taken from you and given to another.”

“ My beloved,” replied her husband, calmly, “ what can you be thinking about ? ”

“ You shall be cast away, and—” (her eyes here gleamed frightfully, whilst she screamed the remaining words)—“ and he shall have his own. I have gone for him already, and I am bringing him to take possession of his own.”

“ I do not understand you.”

At this moment Mrs. Cowley made a grimace, and, gnashing her teeth, declared she was sick of the sight of her husband. The latter had now become quite dispirited, and, hastening from her presence, he retired to a summer-house,

situated some distance from the villa, in a sequestered part of the grounds.

Meeting the gardener on his way thither, he desired him to tell his son he should remain there the whole evening, and perhaps pass the night there.

"What!" expostulated the old Irishman, but speaking as respectfully as he could, "and leave us alone with the missus."

"How foolish you are!" replied the other, in a tone which instantly silenced the humble Philip, and made him sad at the same time, so expressive was it of that kind of impatience which is occasioned by interior suffering.

The happiness of the inmates of the Villa Algorouki had been on the decline ever since the first disappearance of Willibald; and the joy occasioned by his re-appearance had been too transient to leave any impression, whilst the events that immediately followed had each tended to increase the gloom that filled the mind of every member of the household. It was nothing, but the strength of their religious principles which enabled the servants to bear up against the depression under which they all laboured. Foreseeing the desolation in which the family would be left, if forsaken by themselves, they had generously agreed with each other that the devil himself should not drive them away before he had succeeded in expelling their employer. Such conduct was the more to be admired, inasmuch as they were none of them on what is called good terms with Captain Cowley and his son. The two latter, as the reader will recollect, had been from the first indisposed to conclude from the symptoms, such as we have described them, that Mrs. Cowley was possessed, and they had always severely censured, as rash, the opposite conclusion at which the servants had arrived; whilst the latter, feeling convinced that the reproach was equally presumptuous and assuming, steadily adhered to the opinion. Their notion at present was, that the devils were doing all they could, through spite against Willibald for having, as they concluded he had done, assumed the habit of St. Francis, to expel his parents from their abode: and they frequently made so bold as to represent to Captain Cowley that he would certainly be overcome by them and compelled to retreat, unless he would get a priest to administer exorcism to his wife and to bless his

house. They were very much scandalised by his obstinacy in refusing to do so, and especially by that of his son, Simon, which they considered to be solely the result of the spirit of opposition.

Shortly after his entrance into the summer-house, Captain Cowley was joined by Simon. It was near eleven o'clock. The father and son had passed the whole of the evening reading. The air being chilly, they had closed the door, and now sat, the former with his back to the lamp, the latter in the favourite attitude of studious youth with his book on the table, his elbows on each side, and his chin resting on his hands, which were clenched and piled one on the other. He was spelling his way through an old MS. from the pen of some Italian Dugdale, which he had recently purchased at a book-stall in —. The father was reading a commentary on the Book of Job, being at this particular moment in the act of endeavouring to solve the question—In what respect does my condition, spiritually speaking, differ from that of holy Job?—when both were startled by a gentle tap at the door.

The door was instantly opened, when, to his no small disgust, but still greater relief, the captain beheld Philip, with all the other servants at his heels; his wife, a sturdy, thick-set Irishwoman being foremost of the posse. She was of a choleric and rash temperament; and her expressive, but coarse features seemed to say at this moment, "I'm not a bit ashamed of myself, and I don't care for you not a rush, though you *are* the master."

This language of the eyes, though suiting her natural disposition, was so much at variance with the dictates of humility which Captain Cowley had almost daily occasion to admire in Mrs. Molloney, that it disconcerted him not a little. Thinking to be helped by the context, he now hurriedly glanced at the other faces, but here were only so many repetitions of Mrs. Molloney's expression. Great was his astonishment, but it lasted only a minute. The foreman feared no more declaring than they testifying what had brought them there. Fear, it appeared, had seized each heart of that high and mighty kind which breeds a total indifference to all dangers of the trifling kind to which the wrath of a Christian master belongs. Some spoke only of leaving

next day, but others indulged in expressions inexplicably rude and contemptuous.

"Philip!" exclaimed the captain, in the tone of one literally almost plagued to death, "tell me briefly what has happened."

"Bless your heart, Captain Cowley," replied Philip, energetically, with a look of unwonted earnestness, and with marks of agitation that were distressing to behold, "your lady has been going on in a way as *you* never see the like of in all *your* born days. If it had been the day, I shouldn't have minded it so much, but to hear such talk as that in the night was more than any Christian body could stand. You may hear her now, master, if you please."

The Captain and Simon put their heads out of the door of the summer-house, and were not a little disconcerted when, distinctly enough, a long wild laugh came from all the windows, as if the sound within were occupying equally the whole house; presently, this single voice seemed to be multiplied into several hundred. The villa appeared to be full of human beings; it was as if a ball had been given which had necessitated the throwing open of every room for the accommodation of the numerous guests. The conversation was for some time quiet enough, but it gradually grew more animated, and the exclamation *Viva!* was repeated by all at once nearly a dozen times with an ever-increasing vehemence, until, as if amused at their own quasi-enthusiasm, all fell laughing loudly. Then this violation of nature's laws was suddenly repressed, and silence,—but not a pleasing silence, —rather one that left the listener restless and amazed, succeeded the infernal uproar. Paradise seemed everywhere but where they were doomed to dwell, to each of the little party which was gathered round the door of the summer-house. During several minutes, Captain Cowley could not but think of his wife but as one of the banished crew, as a thing that was not, and he was for leaving all—wife, family, and estate—and wandering forth a beggar that very night, rather than remain longer where God seemed not to dwell. It was the sturdy Philip who brought him to his senses.

"Did you ever hear the like of that?" asked he, scratching his mouth, and looking fixedly and familiarly in his master's face.

The Captain remained silent.

"You're not doing the mistress no good, and you're not doing yourself no good, shutting your eyes to what's so starin' plain to everybody else, master. Why, if things run on at this rate, you'll soon have the house deserted by everybody but the mistress."

"That I'm sure he will, muttered Mrs. Molloney, doggedly, "Isn't it pretty nigh come to that already?"

But Captain Cowley, though disposed to humour these two on points that in no way compromised his own dignity as their master, was only exasperated into his original scepticism by being attacked in this way at disadvantage.

"If," said he, "you are so foolish as to fly out of the house every time your mistress has a fit of hysterics, you will soon become valueless in my eyes as servants, and I shall then send you away."

"Ha," snorted Philip, as these unwonted sounds assailed his ears, "send us away! Master, you'll have no call to send us away; we are only stopping now to serve you."

"No, that I'm sure we ain't," chimed in Mrs. Molloney. "Little's the comfort we have now a livin' here; besides that, Philip and me is a gittin' old now, and we ain't a match for such work as this here now; it's a wearin' of us out."

"Well," replied the Captain, "we'll talk about that to-morrow morning, you had better now go to the barn and lie down in the bay."

The whole troop now withdrew, following the directions of their master. On reaching the barn, however, the women only lay down; Philip and the other men lit their pipes and smoked and talked for some time longer.

"You mark my words," said Philip, oracularly, "they'll put her in a madhouse sooner than they'll believe she's possessed. They *must* do one or the other, and they're sure to do that; gentlefolks are always that way. They can't a bear to think that any belonging to them can ever come to be possessed; that's why you so seldom hear of any of they being possessed, though I suppose there's no difference 'twixt them and poor folks in the devil's eyes, unless it is that their money makes them harder to get hold of, and more troublesome customers."

Philip's prognostication turned out to be perfectly correct.

Before the expiration of the current year, Captain Cowley became fully convinced that his wife was mad; in other words, that she had lost the ability to submit to the dictates of reason, and that, therefore, force must be applied to her as a substitute for that keeper without which man becomes a consuming element which we must *imprison*, like fire, but *preserve* with the care of a Sanctuary lamp, because its life is still under the protection of a commandment. He chose, however, to keep her beneath his own roof, and hired persons to attend on and control her.

In the mean time he and Simon endeavoured to pass their time as they used to do in times past. Simon worked at his history; the captain read incessantly. But they studied now with knit brows, which indicated an excited state of the will. Their trials, in other words, had begun, and the tug of war was making them fully sensible of their own weakness. Indeed, the Villa Algorouki was now become little else than a private madhouse, and the captain and Simon led a life very similar to that of regular mad-doctors. In this way they subsisted from week's end to week's end, from month's end to month's end; not seeing how any change for the better could befall, and, therefore, never expecting any.

CHAPTER XXX.

O pools of Hesebon, the baths of grace,
Where happy spirits dive in sweet desires,
Where saints delight to glass their glorious face,
Whose banks make echo to the angel-choirs :
An echo sweeter in the sole rebound
Than angels' music in the fullest sound.

O eyes, whose glances are a silent speech,
In cypher'd words high mysteries disclosing,
Which with a word all sciences can teach,
Whose texts to faithful hearts need little glozing,
Witness unworthy I, who in a look
Learnt more by rote than all the scribes by book.

R. SOUTHWELL, S. J.

LET us now, albeit retrospectively, run after the fugitive Willibald. He had to pass the night of the day on which he took his departure in the open air. His path, on starting the following morning, lay through a wood, but not a thick one, so that the sun poured its light into the avenue, and penetrated far enough into the grove to remove all appearance of gloom. Never, in his life, had he seen so many birds, and it seemed as if here every species known in Europe was on its native ground ; but what amazed him most was, their excessive boldness, for many flew after him and lit upon his head and shoulders—indeed, their attentions at last became so significant and impressive, that he was relieved from a feeling of terror when, on the distant approach of a human being, they all flew away, and disappeared among the green leaves.

He was not sorry to behold this personage, the first human being he had met since his departure, and from whom, consequently, he strongly hoped to obtain the information required about the road. The stranger turned out to be a parish priest, mounted on a mule ; Willibald therefore, before making known his wants, respectfully saluted him, and asked his blessing. This was carelessly given, and the priest seemed determined not to waste another word on the person who had asked it. He rode on. Willibald, therefore, was compelled to turn, and put his questions as he hurried after him. But

the mule strode on, and no answer was vouchsafed until Willibald had retraced his steps in this manner for nearly a quarter of a mile. The *curé* then pulled up rather suddenly, and in a somewhat querulous tone said, "My good man, what is it you are saying?"

"I am asking, reverend father," replied Willibald, "whether this is the most direct road to the monastery of ———, and which path I must take when I come to the next division of the present one into two or more?"

"Why did you allow me to draw you so far out of your road?" then suddenly altering his manner, he continued—"You look very hot, and no wonder; I shall be melted before I reach ———." Here, the reverend speaker, who was fat, took off his hat, and wiped his bald head and face. "Have you had your breakfast yet; you look very much as if you hadn't. Come, I see how it is with you. You must go to my house, and wait there till I return; I shall be back directly, and then we'll breakfast together. When you get to the next village it will be impossible for you to make a mistake. My house adjoins the church. Tell the house-keeper to show you into the green room, with my treasure in it, and she will at once understand that I have sent you."

Without waiting for an answer the pastor, as he uttered these words, jogged off, leaving Willibald in the mind to obey all his directions to the letter. As he advanced the wood began to recede from his path, and, falling into a carriage road, he was soon breasting a steep hill, in a cloud of dust, which could only escape by charging him in the face, as the banks on each side of the road were high and the breeze came from the west. After walking nearly a mile uphill, he beheld, with a turn of the road, the picturesque village of ——— before him, and, at the same moment, his eye lit on the pastor's house; not to be mistaken, by reason of its proximity to the church. On a nearer approach he received, from the situation and general aspect of the church, an agreeable impression. It was spacious and well proportioned, with, however, nothing in the shape of architecture about it, excepting the façade, which resemble most of the façades that are seen in this part of Italy. At the sides were traces of pilasters, which showed it to have been originally a heathen temple.

Thus it now served the double purpose of a church and a memorial of the condescension of God, who disdains not to dwell in any house that has once been consecrated to his service by the will of his creatures.

There is nothing of this description too mean for Him. Does he not, indeed, appear to *prefer* poor churches, as he often does poor and humble men, to those magnificent edifices which some often avowedly "take a pride" in providing for Him, and in so doing doubtless incur a participation in the censure which was directed to St. Martha—"Thou art troubled about much serving, but one thing is needful—a heart like Mary's." The dark foliage of a number of cypresses that had been planted in the rear of the sacred edifice, contrasted as a pleasing relief with the light cream-coloured wash enveloping its walls.

* * * *

On tapping at the door, Willibald was soon confronted by the housekeeper, who, before she had heard the *open sesame* with which he had come provided, had read at a glance enough of the stranger's character to be ready to make him master of the house until the curé should return. Willibald, however, took great pains to explain that his message would serve to show her if there really were such a room as that indicated by the epithet, green, and the circumstance of its containing a something which the owner designated, *par excellence*, his treasure, that it must have been put into his mouth by her reverend master.

The green room faced the south, and had an air of indomitable cheerfulness about it. The breakfast things were spread on the table, in the middle. On a smaller table, nearer the window, stood a writing-table, on which appeared some ten or twelve small piles of books, two or three newspapers, and a number of small articles which were unconsciously recognized by Willibald as indications of a taste for literature, and a strong attachment to the vocation of an ecclesiastic. As he scanned the numerous cabinet pictures that adorned the walls, the same impression was produced, and with it Willibald felt that everything in this cheerful green room conduced to gladden, to edify, to encourage, by discovering, most ingeniously, the *sociability* of religion—"My delight is to dwell with the children of men;" so that

soon every breath he took of this wholesome atmosphere seemed to be a spiritual as well as a bodily gain.

Being a judge of paintings, he was not long in determining what it was here that the *padre* styled his "treasure." The picture thus to be prized was the work, Willibald could see at a glance, of some comparatively modern artist, but a pious one, a real one, a devoted one. Yet there was nothing in the style at all akin to the so-called pre-Raffaellite school. This painter did not compose to illustrate a theory but "*con amore*," i. e., artistically, for himself, and for others only by accident. This made the spectator eager to appreciate, for this left on his production the impress of simplicity,—that most alluring of all the proper features of a thing of beauty. The present picture represented a scene, not described, but implied, by the sacred historian, where he says, alluding to the death of St. John the Baptist, "*And his disciples came and took the body, and buried it, and came and told Jesus, which, when Jesus had heard, he retired. . .*" The painter could not get on here so rapidly as the Evangelists relate this passage in the eventful life of their heavenly Master. He, with St. Bonaventure, had laid down here the Holy Gospel, on whose suggestive lines he was meditating, and had striven to bring before the eyes of his mind the expression (another gospel) of the holy face of our divine Redeemer at that moment. When the Apostles came to tell the Lord of heaven and earth that his favourite Baptist had been beheaded, some of them naturally were trembling at the thought of the wrath to come, perhaps at that moment, in punishment of an outrage so impious: whilst others, in all probability, would be wondering whether the news would have a disheartening effect on their most meek Master, who was never seen to smile. Thus all approached full of concern, and not knowing what these things meant: portentous, therefore, was that moment. The Lord of course knew, in one way already, what had taken place; but we may, perhaps, be allowed to suppose that his human sympathies were not alive to it previous to their arrival. Then loving, as he always did, to dwell with the children of men, he suffered his heavenly countenance to say what, in a strong voice, he uttered on his way to the place of his execution, when he beheld, among those who followed, the woman who bewailed

and lamented him. So, at least, the painter of this picture had thought. And our Lord was looking thoughtfully upwards, with a deep unfathomable meaning in those "worlds of light,"—his divine eyes,—from which, following here the suggestion of St. Bonaventure, he had thought proper to drop a tear for John's sake, who, however, so the face said, was far from being the sole subject of his reflections at that moment. Willibald was charmed with the picture. He was soon deeply plunged into the pious intention of the artist, and found there a charming "solitude," in which the love of the eternal Son for the Father was seen to unusual advantage, because seen in one of those

" ————— beams
Which sweetly flow in silent streams "

from the bright throne above of "the spirit of them both." He had remained before it nearly an hour, and was fast losing the feeling of lively interest he had at first taken in everything else in this green room, when a heavy hand clapped upon the shoulder caused him to turn suddenly round.

"What," said the rough, base voice of his host, just returned, "you have found out my treasure already, have you? But come, we will look at that again presently. I want my breakfast, and I am sure you must be hungry in spite of the feast you have just had."

It is a common saying, that all children are physiognomists; so that it is an idle insinuation, though common enough, that the continuance of this power after the years of childhood is due to the acquisition, with an increase of years, of presumption and curiosity. Willibald was almost unconsciously a physiognomist. He could see at the first glance that the principles of his new acquaintance were conformable with every Christian precept, though the dark, red, fat face, blue-black eyebrows and hair, now but a scanty crop, and beard of the same colour, the absence of all approach to regularity in the features, and the frown which alternated on his face with a grin denoting a sentiment that had in it a dash of something like insolence, would have put on his guard a less practised observer just entering on an intimacy with this saintly padre. It was the small jet-black, piercing eye that informed the soul of Willibald what his companion was

aiming at ; that he was in the midst of a heavy burden, consisting of the world attached to him by five quick and most healthy senses, and a very lively imagination, still, ever like the blessed apostle St. Paul, forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth himself to those that are before . . . towards the mark, to the prize of the supernal vocation of God in Christ Jesus ; so that, in the midst of their conversation about breakfast and pictures, &c. &c., he seemed also always to be saying, " Let us, therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded."

" Who," said Willibald, accepting a plateful of red mullets, and a capacious cup of coffee, " painted that picture ?"

" An Englishman," replied the priest, " whom I received into the Church at ——. He was a great genius. Look at the drawing there. He was quite a young man when I became acquainted with him. At that time he had painted no religious pictures ; but a scene from one of Shakspeare's plays showed his genius. I have a brother, an artist, living at —, who knew him intimately, and he took me to see this picture. I don't know where it is now. Look here," said the speaker, putting an Italian translation of King Lear into Willibald's hands, whom he took to be an Italian. " There, that's the scene ; read that, from there to there." Willibald saw at a glance the subject-matter of the picture. If the present royal academician, Mr. Herbert, had painted it himself, it could not have been more like his celebrated rendering of the same scene which he exhibited in London in the year ——. The face, the hands, the attitude of Cordelia as she painfully retorts—

" So young, my Lord, and true."

These discover the incomparable genius of the artist : for only a very large share of the power that seems to have distinguished Shakspeare above all other writers of self-identification with the subject in hand could have enabled the artist to conceive a gesticulation so exquisitely expressive of the *heroicity* of the speaker. " Cordelia," continued the priest, " seemed to me to be the exact representation of a soul in the very act of detaching itself, in their very presence, from the world, the flesh, and the devil, that it might embrace for its sole portion the will of God."

"I thought of the dove venturing forth from the ark, not as yet knowing whether Providence would meet her there, yet thinking, perhaps, it would be so—*Does my heart deceive me, or is there, beyond these, one who is a thousand times truer than I?* Poor Cordelia! It was a most affecting representation; and when I reached home, I did nothing but pray for the conversion of the man who had painted it. He, said I, like the blessed Austin, loves before he knows thee. For the man had no religion whatever, though the odour of a preventing grace seemed to hang around him, making me long to behold the day when the good Shepherd would discover himself to his own by the mysterious voice which he would know, though he had never heard it before.

"I was the only priest with whom he had any acquaintance, and, therefore, I thought it the more incumbent on me to bring him acquainted with the truths of our holy religion. He possessed in an eminent degree greatness of mind, and was, therefore, easy to convert. Entirely devoid of moral timidity, he sat like a despot on his throne of being, to hear what I had to say as an ambassador from his Creator. At first he seemed to smile at my apparent impudence and pertinacity, but gradually the understanding began to show marks of being awake. I did not desist, and in the space of a few months the faith 'that cometh by hearing' had inflamed the good-will of my foundling, and he was all impatience to make his profession of faith. The painter all this while remained as busy as ever, so that you could scarcely have believed him capable of apprehending the mysteries of our holy faith with the vigour he exhibited, had you seen him at his easel when religion had ceased to be the topic of our conversation. Every painter should be of a contemplative cast of mind, and this my friend was eminently. Soon he could paint nothing but religious pictures, and each of these might be compared to the spiritual nosegay we are taught to derive from our daily morning meditation. They were all excellent in their way: every touch was eloquent, and above proof in the matter of truthfulness and significance. Mine, there, was one out of many that were, perhaps, all equally good. I chose it myself, and I am the more strenuous in its praise, no doubt, because I did so."

"Is he still living?"

"Oh yes, thank God! By the way, you will see him if you are going to the Monastery of ———, for he now belongs to that community; he is a lay-brother. There was something in his nature essentially opposed to what begets a hungering after the ecclesiastical state; this, perhaps, was his genius for painting; not that he was not ready to renounce the palette in order to be admitted as a postulant, but then no other predilection made its appearance in the place of that set aside. Hence, he preferred being professed a lay-brother, in which state he would escape the pain of employing the higher powers of his mind in a way that was wholly uncongenial, though, at the same time, he should reap the mortification of foregoing the use of them altogether. After his profession, however, his prudent Superior began to turn these talents to account, for he was not unmindful of the parable of the talents, which he said seemed more applicable to a person possessing the control of talents not forming a part of his own being, than to him who might so early be tempted to vain glory by the use of them. You will see some capital pictures in their church and elsewhere by him. They have also made a present or two, and sold several, of his productions; in fact, now, they seldom part with one excepting for an equivalent in money. The painter, all the while, remains a perfect sieve; it is only the *act* of painting that he cares about, the paintings themselves that come from his brush are no more to him than are the materials by means of which his impressions are so aptly expressed. I firmly believe that that man loves his God so much that he has no time to love himself. He is a true Franciscan, I promise you."

As he spoke, the eye of the padre wandered inquiringly over the visage before him, as if an apprehension of Willibald's mission had suddenly seized him. Willibald could hardly suppress a smile, as, preserving still his incognito, he asked a string of questions about the convent in a tone of voice that entirely mystified his companion, who, however, still remained sufficiently communicative.

"This community," he said, "has been peculiarly unfortunate in the loss of a Superior, whose disappearance could never be accounted for, and so has left in the minds of those who remain a feeling of restless expectation, which makes

them view every arrangement they are compelled from time to time to make as provisional, though it is now nearly ten years since the good Father ceased to be forthcoming. His loss was much to be deplored on another account: where he was, God was more communicative and more abounding than elsewhere. We are but *nominally* temples of the Holy Gospel compared to this soul. Wherever he was, you felt yourself quite safe, as though his presence had the protective quality of a Sanctuary."

His promise to Carmen kept his mouth closed; but Willibald felt certain at that moment he could tell where the lost guardian tarried.

The conversation continued for nearly an hour after their breakfast was finished. Willibald then rose, thanked his reverend host for his hospitality, and stood ready to start, but still inquiring the way.

"I tell you what," said the other, rising too, "I will accompany you. I want to go to the monastery; I go there for confession, and there is no reason in the world why I shouldn't accompany you now. I shan't be in your way? And you wont mind my mule, for I cant walk so far."

Feeling that the speaker would render his first application for admission as a postulant to both parties more acceptable, for Willibald's firm intention was to approach the Fathers as a perfect stranger, and to be known to them only as a penitent, he was delighted at the proposition, and the padre accordingly ordered his mule to be brought to the door, and left the room to prepare farther for his ride. Willibald, at the same time, went and paid a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. The thought here struck him that he should be recognised by somebody or other as he passed through the village, and that a clue to his retreat would thus soon be put into the hands of his parents; he saw, therefore, the necessity of treating his present host with a little more confidence than he had hitherto done, and to beg of him the loan of some disguise.

Scarcely had he said the word, when his new friend exclaimed with glee:

"You shall be a travelling padre. I have an old cassock that will just fit you, and with the hat slouched well your disguise will be impenetrable to mere passers-by. No one saw you come in."

Willibald lost no time in availing himself of this effectual mode of covering his retreat ; and after a few minutes came out of the room in which he had changed his dress in the guise of a ——— pastor. All that was attractive in his exterior had now disappeared ; but Willibald eyed with complacency the friendly shade wherein he was so completely hid from the seductive gaze of the world. He laughed outwardly ; but the feeling of relief he experienced at that moment caused him inwardly to make an act of thanksgiving to Him who, by that cloak, seemed to say to his soul, in answer to a petition long insensibly made : “ I will—be thou clean.” But this very cleanness, which left his spirit in a state of nudity, made him long more vehemently than ever to be attached to the religious body he was now approaching step by step.

Fine scenery presented itself in every direction as they journeyed towards the monastery ; but the form of the clouds, the shape of the mountains, the hue of the distances, the situation of the waters, and the grouping of the trees were matters that no longer, now, provoked the attention of the younger of the travellers. He saw nothing at present on the surface of the earth but the monastery to which he hurried with feelings similar to what we may imagine a young officer’s would be who was making his way in disguise through the enemy’s country to join in the defence of a beleaguered fortress he should be able to help when *there*, but not before.

“ It is a wild place we are going to,” said his companion, “ and so poverty-stricken that, were it not for the presence of the rusty-looking brethren, you would think it had been uninhabited for the last twenty years. There is nothing even in the church that is calculated to please, excepting the pictures I have mentioned ; they have no organ, and their chanting has a forlornness about it which almost sets me howling like a dog when I hear it. But this, of course, is all owing to my being so wholly destitute of the spirit which makes the true Franciscan hail Poverty as his mistress. I admire, but cannot love, this favourite of theirs and of our blessed Redeemer. I agree entirely with the words of the Jesuit, Colombiere ; ‘ *Il me semble que c’est dans la pratique de cette pauvreté parfaite, que consiste la véritable grandeur de l’ame Que c’est être vraiment Roi que de mépriser tout ce que les hommes possèdent !* ’

"The uninstructed admire and envy the condition of a fearless outlaw, like the famous Englishman, Robin Hood; but much more should they admire that of a band of Franciscans, who are outlaws by their meekness and submissiveness, and, without possessing anything, get as much as is required for their daily support by asking instead of stealing."

"It is a curious thing," said Willibald, thinking aloud, rather than speaking with a purpose; "but I remember constantly fancying, when I was a boy, that I could be happy in no other condition than that of an outlaw, in other words, a Bandit."

"Ha! then you are going to be a Franciscan, are you? Of course! I should have seen it long ago, and I did, too; but this confession makes it so staringly evident, that I can conceal my impression no longer. You see, don't you, that as our Lord had familiarized his servants, Peter and Andrew, with the habit of mind which was best adapted to their final vocation as apostles, by giving them, through His providence, the occupation of fishermen, before He called them, and revealed the mystery by saying, 'Henceforth you shall be fishers of men;' so He allowed you first to have these wild fancies, that, eventually, he might say, 'Henceforth you shall be a scaler of souls,' in other words, a follower of the holy thief, St. Francis of Assissium, who began his career just in the style of Robin Hood, by plundering his father to give to the poor."

Laughing at this plesantry, Willibald continued, "It is no doubt to be attributed to this thievish instinct, that a Protestant friend of mine once had his pocket picked of four or five dollars by a man in the livery of St. Francis."

"Of course," said the padre, laughing heartily. "I shall tell our friends of this, and they will say in return, 'Poor fellow! in his simplicity he no doubt thought that the soul of the rich man and his own body would equally profit by the new arrangement.' But, to return to my own *gout*, or *attrait*; I could never get on without the help of my green room, and my treasure, and my books, newspaper, journal, and pen. This great carcase must have wheels to go upon. I could never keep my heart raised up in the way that these light-fingered gentry do from one end of the year to another, without once allowing it a taste of the harmless creature comforts

which enable me to persevere in the warfare I am engaged in. How thankful ought I to be, therefore (and I am), that there is a third way of serving—that of *curing* souls !”

* * * * *

The conversation continued, but in what way it and the journey ended, we have no occasion to tell in the present chapter.

END OF PART I.

PART II.—ENGLAND.

CHAPTER XXXI.



WE are distant now a period of six years from the day that witnessed the Butwell's departure from ——. They returned rapidly to England, thence, as they thought then, never again to depart; nor have they, as yet, once thought of another foreign tour.

Englishmen, at the present time, attribute the political prosperity of the country to the result of the overthrow of church influences, forgetting that Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, in order to cast out Catholicity, took the new religion, in such wise, under their protection, as to render it, in its effects on those not inclined to embrace it, nothing but a thing of death. It was for all so minded an inquisition of an aggressive—not simply like that of Spain—of a protective character, and, as such, calculated to be just twice as inimical as the latter to the interests of civilization. To what then are we to attribute our great national prosperity, which is the admiration of the whole world at the present time? To the gradual extension of the influence of reason. Our constitution is then in its healthiest state when reason is most vigorously opposing the influence of an *authority* pretending to a jurisdiction superior to that of reason. Now, without being opposed to true religion, reason stands apart therefrom, and has everywhere its distinct representatives. Where, therefore, these functionaries perform their duties with the greatest amount of heroic fidelity, there will temporal prosperity most abound. England's national prosperity is to be referred directly to the courageous fidelity with which the representatives of reason struggle with one another, and all other opponents, to secure the reign of reason in the minds of her rulers, magistrates, and officers of every description; so

that a modern writer aptly designates her "the armed wisdom of Europe." It is not, therefore, to religionists that England is indebted for her present prosperity, let that ever be borne in mind, but to the influence of her great statesmen, philosophers, warriors, and mechanists.

The hardest and most triumphant battle reason has fought since the Reformation is that in favour of toleration ; and to this day religious prejudice, in its vast and thievish hostility to reason, may be styled the Russia of her moral foes.

One of the anecdotes recently told of the "Iron Duke" is, that whilst hunting near Strathfieldsaye, he had a gate shut in his face by a labouring man. The duke, accustomed to the indulgence usually extended to all engaged in the chase, remonstrated, but the peasant, less courteous than custom, stood by his gate—so says report—pitchfork in hand, and said, "The French couldn't stop you, but I will ;" and, sure enough, the duke, unable to withstand the appeal of a fellow-countryman, however irritating, was effectually checked, and forced, by this single individual, to make a *detour*.

Now it is exactly in this way that the statesman, however powerful against every other foe, is met in the midst of his official operations by the domestic enemy, religious prejudice, which derives its power from the relation in which it stands, both to himself and the present promoter of its interests, as the professed chief concern of their lives.

It is for this reason we are disposed to account as a more brilliant victory than that of Waterloo, the duke's share, as a representative of reason, in the defeat of prejudice, which took place on occasion of the accomplishment of Catholic emancipation.

Amongst the brave who were so fortunate as to be engaged on the winning side in that memorable conflict was Sir Francis Butwell, who was operated upon with this happy result by the very small preponderance that had place in him, of reason over prejudice. The *gentleman*, a spirit which glories in a faithful obedience under all circumstances to the dictates of reason, was too strong in him to admit of his conjunction with the unscrupulous representatives of that basest motive, prejudice.

The proper reply to those opposed to what is termed a liberal policy towards Catholics, on grounds reflecting on

the principles of Catholics is, that *the country will keep them in order*, exactly as she does the hosts of her children to whom, although demagogues at heart, and by open profession, she is not afraid to allow a participation in the liberties that belong to them of right as citizens. This, we say, is the proper reply, because it is the only one that exactly meets the point of objection urged by the alarmists. But as their alarm is merely assumed to influence the minds of their opponents, it is no relief to them to receive an answer of this description. They still retain the desire to have things their own way, and, therefore, refuse to do battle where they see that in fair fight they shall fall, and fly to another weaker point of the entrenchments of the champions of reason,—that is, they begin to parade *facts*, books are opened, tracts are thrown to the soldiery, and every effort is made in this way to break the solid squares with which they find their efforts to compass the destruction of Catholicity steadily opposed. In a general way, little is gained by the employment, in retaliation, of the same kind of weapon. The soldiery, however, constantly desire it, and refutations, consequently, must be liberally supplied, and counter-charges made.

Sir Francis Butwell would gladly have confined himself to the illustration of the single truth constituting the answer proper to the opposition, because he wished to escape an attack which his letters, written when he was last at ———, laid him open to; but in an early stage of the discussion these very letters were triumphantly appealed to, both in speeches and in newspapers, by the anti-Catholic party, so that he was forced to bestir himself. At first, he was mightily perplexed, because the task before him seemed to involve the necessity of reconciling two truths, which bore every outward appearance of being flat contradictions to one another. He believed, with his party, that no danger was to be apprehended by any liberal government from the influences of Catholicity, and yet he believed he had spoken the truth, when he pointed to the condition of Spain and ——— in proof of its alleged tendency to cramp those powers of the human mind by which alone, and by fair discussion, the complicated interests which it is the duty of governments separately to appreciate and impartially to provide for, can be secured. In the course of his reading and meditations pre-

paratory to active campaigning, in his capacity of member of parliament, whilst hammering over the case of Spain, he took up a volume of Bouterwec's "Geschichte," &c.—*i. e.*, History of Poetry and Eloquence, from the close of the thirteenth century. "Let us see," said he, "what he will say. Being a philosopher, and writing only on a literary topic, he will furnish, no doubt a true account of the origin, object, and effects of the Inquisition."

The volume Sir Francis took up was in German. We take the following quotation from the translation of the single volume, containing the history of Spanish literature, published by Bogue. The whole of Bouterwec's account, beginning with book ii., is singularly conclusive as to the fact that the Catholic religion, previous to the rise of the Inquisition, sat only too lightly on the shoulders of the inhabitants of that country. It was, as it were, their hobby, their fancy, their war-cry. From Bouterwec's account, they seem to have scarcely done more than glanced at the doctrine of their Redeemer, in order to acquire the devotion they manifested in their wars with the Moors. But it was the following passage which most excited the astonishment of our worthy M.P.:—

"About the same period, when Ferdinand and Isabella united their dominions, they also co-operated in the establishment of that terrible tribunal, which soon became known throughout Europe by the name of the Spanish Inquisition, and which, to the disgrace of human reason, exercised, during two centuries and a half, its monstrous powers in their fullest extent. A crafty policy contrived to render religion its instrument, in subjugating to one common tyranny the reason and the rights of mankind; for *the establishment of regal despotism in both kingdoms was the great object of this institution*, and its whole organization corresponded with the end for which it was destined. The Pope, who penetrated the design of the founders, viewed their proceedings with much dissatisfaction; but even the Pope was obliged to support the pretended interest of the Church, and to honour Ferdinand by bestowing on him, as a peculiar distinction, the title of 'Catholic King.' Thus the court of Rome contributed to annul the privileges of the Cortes of Castile and Arragon, and to invest the whole power of

government, without limitation, in the hands of an absolute monarch; and thus did political artifice triumph over the energy of one of the noblest nations in the world, at the very moment when the genius of that nation had begun to expand, when the promising flower had burst forth from the bud, and was about to unfold itself in full vigour and beauty. A simultaneous and concordant cultivation of the different powers of the human mind was now as little to be hoped for in Spain as the improvement of her political constitution. Under these circumstances the literary genius of the country could not be expected to reach that high maturity of taste which always presupposes a certain degree of harmony in the moral and intellectual faculties. Poetic freedom was circumscribed by the same shackles which fettered moral liberty. Thoughts which could not be expressed without fear of the dungeon and the stake, were no longer materials for the poet to work on. His imagination, instead of improving them into poetic ideas, and embodying them in beautiful verse, had to be taught to reject them. But the eloquence of prose was more than poetry bowed down under the inquisitorial yoke, because it was more closely allied to truth, which, of all things, was most dreaded.

"The yoke of this odious tribunal weighed, however, far less heavily on the imagination than on the other faculties of the mind; and it must be confessed that a wide field still remained open for the range of fancy, though the boundaries of religious doctrine were not permitted to be overstepped. To suppose that the Spanish Inquisition could have entirely annihilated the poetic genius of the nation, it must also be supposed, that at the period of its establishment there had existed a style of poetry altogether hostile to such an institution, and that the spirit of the Inquisition was directly opposed to the spirit of the nation. But it would be forming a false notion of the horrors of the Inquisition to imagine that they were ever felt in Spain in the same manner as in other countries, and particularly in the Netherlands, where that tribunal was introduced hand-in-hand with foreign despotism. When the Inquisition was established in Spain, it harmonized to all appearance, that is to say, as far as orthodox faith was concerned, with the prevailing opinions of the Spanish Christians. It was ostensibly directed not so much against

heretics as against infidels, for no sect of Christian heretics existed at that period in Spain, and the Inquisition took care that none should be afterwards formed. To maintain the purity of the ancient faith was the avowed object of the Inquisition ; and its wrath was poured out on the unfortunate Jews, Moors, and Moriscos (the descendants of the Moors), with the view of removing every blemish from the faith of a nation which prided itself in its orthodoxy. *This bigoted pride was a consequence of the contest maintained in Spain during four centuries and a half, between Catholic Christianity and Mahometanism.* The Spanish Christians celebrated the conquest of Granada as a triumph of the church ; *and the Inquisition, which at first excited terror, soon became an object of veneration with men in whose hearts religious enthusiasm was inseparably blended with patriotism.*

“ This view of the subject may serve to explain how it happened in the sequel, and particularly during the reign of Philip II., that, while throughout all the rest of Europe, men shuddered at the very name of the Spanish Inquisition, the Spaniards still lived under it as *happily and cheerfully as ever*; and also how, from the operation of the same cause, the ecclesiastical shackles had not a more injurious effect on the development of the poetic genius of the nation. The conduct of the Inquisition was no subject of alarm to those who were confident that they never could have any personal concern with it ; *for the suspicion of deficiency in Catholic orthodoxy, the ground on which that tribunal acted, was more degrading in Spain than the most odious crimes in other countries.* Before the establishment of the Inquisition, fanaticism was so firmly rooted in the minds of the Spaniards, that all scepticism in matters of religion was abhorred as a deadly sin. He, however, who submitted with blind devotion to the decrees of the Church, was held to have a clear conscience, and in *that sort of clear conscience the Spaniards prided themselves.* *The Inquisition disturbed the good Catholic as little in his social enjoyments as criminal justice the citizen who lived in conformity with the laws.* The Spaniard was cruel only to heretics and infidels, because he thought it was his duty to hate them ; but in the orthodox bosom of his native country, he was animated by a spirit of gaiety of which the literature of Spain presents abundant

proofs. While the Duke of Alba in the Netherlands ruled with the axe of the executioner, Cervantes, in Spain, wrote his 'Don Quixote,' and Lope de Vega, who himself held a post connected with the Inquisition, produced his admirable comedies. *The dramatic literature of Spain flourished with most brilliancy during the reigns of the three Phillips, from 1556 to 1665, and that is precisely the period when the Spanish Inquisition exercised its power with the greatest rigour and the most sanguinary cruelty.*"—Book ii. pp. 102-6, *Hist. of Spanish Literature.*

"Ho, ho!" then exclaimed Sir Francis, as he completed the perusal of the above passage, the extraordinary contradictions it involves having entirely escaped his attention, "it is absolute monarchism to which we must ascribe the miseries of Spain, not the influence of the Catholic religion. And the Inquisition can no more be viewed as the proper growth of that religion than ecclesiastical jurisdiction in Russia can be fathered on the Pope. But even viewing the Inquisition as an instrument of the church, it appears from Bouterwec to have been only burdensome where it was introduced 'hand-in-hand with foreign despotism.'" Before he had finished the chapter, the worthy baronet threw down the book in disgust at his own ignorance, mirrored by its pages.

At this moment he suddenly recollected Willibald Cowley's reply to his quotation from the life of St. Ignatius,—that the true spirit of the Church may only be sought for in her favourite and accredited representatives. He saw then, clearly enough, the error he had been guilty of at that time, in attempting to identify her spirit with that of the degenerate community of nuns, instead of that of the sainted reformer of their spirit. Then he suddenly recollected what Willibald had said about the wickedness of Catholics as forming only a continued verification of the words of our Saviour, "I came to call sinners, not the just to repentance;" and thus a proof that Catholicity, if this mark were peculiar to her, possessed in it another sign of its divine origin.

It was now that with profound dissatisfaction Sir Francis began to think over his own conduct at —, during the time at which the police were engaged in the pursuit of Carmen Festa. He scarcely knew whether to be most angry with himself or with those superficial readers who had appro-

priated his representations in his letters published at that time. "What occasion was there for me," said he "to touch upon religion at all? Why could I not be content with simply stating that I had been robbed, and afterwards tricked, and then that I had ineffectually endeavoured to get the head of the band arrested? It was because I belonged then to that silly—that mean set, who, being individually distinguished by their enmity to Catholicity, and who, relishing this reputation, endeavour to make it appear that everything which happens to them happens providentially to supply incontestable evidence, like miracles, of the truth of their doctrine." He saw, with regret, how this false zeal, whilst it draws upon us the applause of the multitude it professes to be serving, renders us indifferent to the interests of the individual; but he did not understand, at the same time, that the zeal of the saints, despising applause, sought ever the individual first, and worked unseen, like the mole, and unconsciously raised those monuments, consisting in multitudes of sincere penitents or converts. "Blindly obeying the instincts of my reputation, I place every character that comes in my way, who has about his position anything telling for my reputation, in a picture intended to excite detestation of every creature there exhibited; and so the poor friar who was found by the police in the robbers' castle—because he refused on very reasonable grounds to play informer against them—figures in my letter as a 'Friar Tuck,' and poor Willibald Cowley, because he professes to be desirous of becoming a Franciscan friar, and refuses to answer questions put to him about his way of life during his supposed residence with the robbers, is represented as a coward and traitor to the cause of law and justice; and his good name as a gentleman is thereby so seriously damaged that he will never be able to show his face again in the circle in which he previously moved with so good a footing."

These thoughts, we say, passed through his mind during his meditations, preparatory to the deliverance of a speech in favour of emancipation, which was eventually the cause of his losing his seat for the first time since his first entrance into the house. He spoke on this occasion, without reference to anything he had ever said before, against Romanism, reserving for a reply, in case reference should be made to the

past, what he had to say on this subject. Being accused of gross tergiversation, he then spoke as follows:—

“I triumphantly point to the change in my sentiments as another proof of the comprehensive nature and superior character of the principles which have guided me since the opening of the present session. When first this Bill came before the House, I stood prepared to oppose it, in conformity with my habitual language in reference to all measures of the like tendency. But I was astonished to find, on considering more deeply the grounds on which the framers of the Bill pressed it forward, that they spoke consistently with a principle of the Protestant religion in contending that the strength of the State was not supposed to be derived from the similarity of the religious principles of those concerned in the government, but from the correspondence between the different interests of the inhabitants and their representatives in Parliament: and that, therefore, no danger could result to the State from the extension of the principle of toleration. This was nothing but a challenge to furnish proof of our confidence in our own principles by allowing Catholics to partake of their beneficial qualities, and I felt that nothing caused me to hesitate but a want of that very confidence. It was, therefore, clear to me that my principles must be unsound, or myself lacking in faith. After some consideration, satisfied that toleration was a legitimate offspring of Protestantism, I perceived that I was dishonouring my own principles by hesitating to follow its dictates on the present occasion: hence, whilst still opposed to Catholicity as a religion, I am changed in my ideas about what is due to Catholics as citizens; and I claim for them what St. Paul claimed for himself, when brought before the Tribune, who boasted that he (the Tribune) had purchased his freedom at a great price; viz., a participation in all the civil privileges that are the birthright of every Englishman. Hence the change in my language about Popery; for in my new position I could see very plainly that the infidelity exhibited by those Protestants who would exclude, in their advocacy of toleration, that religion which, above all others, next to their own, they ought to love the most, deprived them of the power of doing justice to the subject, when they strove to collect from history what effect Catholicity had had on the deliberation of other governments,

where—as in Spain, Italy, the Tyrol, and France—it had been the religion of nearly all the inhabitants of the country from the first introduction of Christianity into those countries. I studied the books they referred to, and studied particularly *myself*; for in a Protestant what is the cessation of toleration but the cessation of charity. Toleration is an imitation of the patience of the Almighty, as it appears in the ample time he gives each for the work of testing the soundness of his religious principles before he commits him for trial by that inquisition which is engaged to punish heresy with eternal flames—tolerating, therefore, every form of worship: and is not this charity, which ‘beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things?’”

By this speech, Sir Francis was so fortunate as to draw upon himself the enmity of a multitude of persons, by whose favour hitherto the faculties of his soul had been greatly enervated. The first sensation that made him conscious of this change in the condition of his spirit was indignation; but this soon gave place to a peculiar internal tranquillity, accompanied by a feeling of thankfulness, which, with his worldly *manners*, manifested itself outwardly by speeches good-humouredly ironical.

It was about this time that Sir Francis often thought of Willibald Cowley. The image of that young man was constantly presenting itself to his mind, and making him feel that something was due in the shape of reparation for the injury he had inflicted on his character. Being “an honourable man,” the baronet gradually gave way to these internal reproaches, that he might see clearly what they were worth.

CHAPTER XXXII.

So long as five years previous to the present time, it had come to the knowledge of Sir Francis that Captain and Mrs. Cowley, and their younger son, had returned to England.

A touring correspondent of Sophia's, whilst travelling in

Italy, had heard that Captain Cowley's title to the estate he had purchased now nearly thirty years ago, and lived upon up to within the last five years, had been disputed, and that a lawsuit, in consequence, had been necessitated, in the course of which it had been proved that the estate had been illegally sold, the heir being still living. The correspondent had also stated that Captain Cowley was understood to be reduced by the loss to a state bordering on beggary, and that he had returned to England to be supported by his relations. Sir Francis had been in the receipt of this news about a year, when a book was published by a physician, a professed member of the Church of England, which created a very great sensation, and renewed in the opponents of Catholic emancipation the hope of ultimately intimidating the State, so far as to set on foot a policy intended to neutralize the effect of the passing of that Bill.

But here for a while we must leave Sir Francis, to conduct the readers to a lunatic asylum situated in one of the Midland counties of England, where they will meet again an old acquaintance.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

IN the year —, adjoining the small town of —, in the county of —, stood the residence of a surgeon who had under his charge some twenty lunatics. They were all persons of respectability, as far as their *connections* were concerned, and the surgeon, who was enlightened, though a somewhat eccentric gentleman, strove hard to make his house a fitting retreat for a fashionable circle of lunatics. It was elegantly furnished. He kept a good table. The grand-piano that stood in his spacious drawing-room was new and always in tune: Broadwood was the maker, and it was one of his best. A harp was there too, and a guitar, a violoncello, and a flute. Books, filled with exquisite engravings and magnificently bound, lay on a spacious round table in the middle of the room, and on the walls, tastefully framed, appeared some

drawings by living artists of high reputation. Visitors frequently sighed to see such capital furniture devoted to the convenience of a parcel of mad people ; but the philosophic doctor maintained that none knew so well how to appreciate such things as those who were *non compos*. Nothing, he said, pleased these good folks so much as a display of this kind. It suited the tone of their mind ; for the mad can never be sufficiently courted : and there is no better antidote for their disease than rank flattery. This is the only thing that appears sensible to them ; this, therefore, is the only thing that soothes.

The modern system of treatment of course found favour in the eyes of our doctor, though he had a few crotchets of his own, which he humbly conceived entitled him to be regarded as the chief luminary of the day among the writers upon mental disease, &c. But others there were who maintained that he was but a dolphin among minnows, and that it was only his own patients who looked upon him as a Solomon. Most mad-doctors are tempted to consider their own heads as the receptacle of an unusual quantity of light. The deficiencies of those around them are no doubt productive of this exaggerated idea of their own intellectual superiority, though it may be to a certain extent true, that a familiarity with a number of human minds in a state of derangement increases the stock of practical wisdom derived from an intercourse with the same.

The moment in the life of the practitioner at which he is first introduced to our readers witnesses him in earnest conversation with a Catholic priest, with whom he is walking up and down on a lawn before the house.

"Her case," said the former, "is certainly remarkable ; but in the course of my experience I have met with many such."

"To what physical cause do you attribute these long and brilliantly-lucid intervals ?" said the priest.

"The diseased portions of the brain at those periods are dormant. In the morning, we all feel clearer about what course we ought to take in a matter that at other times stands like a wall before us, or presents a thousand paths for our choice, each equally inviting. This is because the

imagination has not yet commenced to dart its rays across our mental vision."

"What do you mean by that expression—*mental vision*?"

"The action of the perceptive faculties" (as he spoke, the doctor struck the lower part of his forehead with his fingers); "these are connected more immediately with the visual organs, and by sympathy are the first to come into play when we open our eyes in the morning. Then comes benevolence and veneration, and, finally, ideality. Thus, supposing disease to be located in this latter organ, a person will have a lucid interval so long as this portion remains inactive; but as, in a general way, the diseased parts are those that scarcely ever enjoy any rest, the lucid intervals never occur in the majority of cases."

The priest made no immediate answer to this exposition. He remained silent for nearly five minutes, but his brain was not idle during that time. At last he spoke:—"There may be reason in what you say; it seems a fair enough way of accounting for lucid intervals in some cases, but it does not prove that there are not many in which they are but indications of possession. Answer me candidly, Dr. —, this question:—Do you feel yourself more apt to be irritated by the language of Mrs. Cowley when she is in a state of excitement than by that of any other of your patients?"

"Well, I must confess I do. There is something stinging in her remarks which I do not notice in those of any of my other patients; but that is wholly attributable to the nature of her character. She possesses a penetrating mind; and her guesses at truths that lie unuttered in the hearts of those who approach her are remarkably clever. She obtained such an influence over the mind of one of her attendants, as to render her wholly unfit for the office she filled, and on being dismissed, she exerted herself so effectually to damage the reputation of my asylum, by declaring that this particular patient was perfectly sane, that I was compelled to invite an inquiry. The thing was done quietly, and the name of the patient was not suffered to transpire."

"With what impression did the parties employed in the investigation terminate the examination?"

"Oh, they saw clearly enough that she was fearfully

deranged, and that her madness, as I have also frequently observed, was of that painful kind which originates in a too exclusive application of the mind to religious topics. She spoke much of the disobedience of a son, and described, in a most moving manner, the cold-blooded complicity of a number of friars and priests which had defeated all her efforts to prevent him from emasculating himself by putting on the habit of a Franciscan friar. I fear much, too, that her madness is hereditary, as there is much in the proceedings of this son that indicates a tendency to the same complaint. By the way, a publication which has had and deserves a great circulation, was the result of this investigation. Dr. — is a religious man. He speaks occasionally at Exeter Hall, and is listened to there with much attention, because, being a physician, his zeal as a religionist can be attributed to nothing but the honesty of his intentions. He it was who wrote the book I am speaking of. It lies on my library-table. You may take it with you if you like."

"I am already well acquainted with it. Did you never see the refutation of it by Captain Cowley?"

"No; and, to say the truth, I needed no help to see what it was worth. I look upon it as a mere display of the writer's powers of expression. I know — well: we studied together. He always smelt strongly of bread and butter. His religion was a *feeling*; it was the same in kind as that which makes many a professed atheist afraid to go to bed without saying his prayers. There was nothing sacrificial in its nature. The *idea* of a god mixing itself with all his other ideas gave them a religious cast: this was the *matter* of his religion, and its *practice* consisted of talk. Not that he was immoral; but what was obvious, was that even his morality had nothing in it of a meritorious character. He was *naturally* what Sam Slick called 'modest.' As a writer, he displayed a considerable talent for systematizing, and was quick in learning the application of the terminology of any science he might be studying: but he was wholly disqualified for deep speculation, and never, therefore, added anything new to the existing stock of observations on any subject. I was sure a thin octavo would follow his interview with Mrs. Cowley; and certainly he has made a good use of his materials, and

deserves the thanks of his religious partisans for the masterly manner in which he fits his facts into the anti-Popery theory. You *must* take a copy with you. It will amuse you."

"I have seen it," said the priest smiling. "But to return to the case of poor Mrs. Cowley——"

"Most people know," continued the doctor, interrupting him, "that the Mrs. C—— in this book is the mother of the young Cowley whose name appeared so frequently in the *Times* about ten years ago, when Sir Francis Butwell, the member for D——, bestirred himself so vigorously in ——, in order to bring about the extermination of a band of robbers who infested that country in every direction, and whose leader had, with consummate effrontery, so ingratiated himself with the worthy baronet, his wife, and daughter, as to appear in their eyes desirable as a matrimonial ally."

As he spake, the priest sighed. From his manner, it seemed as though this last utterance had determined him to take his leave without recurring to the inquiry he had apparently come to make. "Now then," he said politely, "I will take my leave."

At that moment a window was thrown open that overlooked the lawn, and one, apparently raving mad, seized the bars, and whilst she endeavoured to pull them away, exclaimed:—

"There is one of the thieves! You, sir! Where is my son? Doctor, have you sent that letter yet? These nasty winds won't let words reach her ears, but if you put that letter in the right box, it will be sure to go—don't you think it will, doctor?"

The speaker referred to a letter she had just addressed to "the Queen of Heaven," for her invisible enemy could not tear from the heart of Mrs. Cowley her devotion to our blessed Lady, which, indeed, was only aggravated into a frantic attachment by his cruelty. He could cause her to speak of the holy apostles as the progenitors of a race of demons, but "Mary" was still her delight; and when she could no longer believe that God was merciful, she, "who was conceived without sin," was still styled by her, "Mary, most merciful."

The reader will perhaps wonder how a practical Catholic like Captain Cowley could continue so long to be indisposed

to try the effects of exorcism. Alas ! was not the very dullness of heart, which gave birth to this reprehensible incredulity, the symptom of a participation, on his part, in the animosity of the "perverse generation," who were the true, though not the visible, keepers of his wife ? Every description of *infatuation* is, no doubt, more or less the product of Satanic agency, yet how few of us are disposed, in the pride of our hearts, to recognise as the cause of our folly the power of fallen angels, whose slaves we ever must be when God abandons us !

Whilst Mrs. Cowley continued to rave, the priest and the doctor were joined by a gentleman who had been pacing up and down beneath the window just spoken of. The priest had unconsciously remarked the appearance of abstraction presented by his whole air ; so that, even when the voice of Mrs. Cowley was loudest, he continued his walk without evincing any signs of attention to exterior objects ; but the result of these deep reflections was now to be made known.

"By a leaf," he said, glancing inquiringly at Dr. — and the priest, "I think I have just succeeded in making out the etymology of the word *seer*. We must not derive it from the verb *to see*, but from the substantive, *a see*. A seer is one who occupies a sec. Hence we may gather what the functions of a bishop were originally intended to be. The duty of a bishop was to watch—ever to have his eyes open—to see *par excellence*. Thus, the geese who saved Rome in the year of the world 390 B.C., are to be regarded as figures of the bishops of Rome, and so, by way of variety, and to avoid tautology, we may very appropriately call the Pope a goose. Having understood that you were a priest, the idea of a goose soon after came so forcibly into my mind, that I was persuaded that there was some hidden connection between the two words, priest and goose ; and you see I was not wrong !" With this, whilst his lack-lustre eye remained fixed on the face of the priest, he presented his snuff-box to him. The latter bowed, and took a pinch. The gentleman then again detached himself from the party, and resumed his walk.

"You will forgive this little reflection," said the doctor, good-humouredly, "when I tell you that it was a priest who

drove that man mad. He is the author of the 'History of —,' a work displaying an unusual grasp of mind, a refined taste, and a good deal of learning. When he wrote that book he was a curate, residing in a retired village in Warwickshire, and as yet unmarried. His chief companion there was a priest, who had the charge of a small chapel in the same village. The latter was comparatively illiterate; he knew a little Latin and theology, but otherwise his mind was a blank. But it was, perhaps, all the more vigorous on that account, and his power in argument was the secret of his influence over the mind of the parson, who otherwise would have found little in his society to make it preferable to that of the farmers about him. By degrees, these two men got to be very great friends. And the curate had lost, by his intercourse with the priest, many prejudices against the Roman Catholic religion. At last the former married. Up to this moment, the two pastors had never meddled with each other's flocks. But very soon after the lady had made her entrance upon the scene, the priest found tracts in the houses of his children. On examination, they proved to be low abusive things, intended simply to fill the minds of the ignorant with exaggerated ideas of all in the Catholic religion which is opposed to the practice and doctrines of the Protestant. Our friend the parson, constrained by the tastes of his *cara sposa* had avoided, of late, the society of the priest, because in her eyes the latter found no favour at all. His brazen steady stare had in it so little of admiration, that she shunned it as a beauty does a bad looking-glass. Besides, she thought the priest vulgar, and did not wish, on that account, to be on intimate terms with him. 'But,' thought the priest, 'these tracts are pestiferous;' and so the first time he met his old friend, he said, 'Come, — ! you know as well as I do that there is not one word of truth in any of these things; how, then, can you bear to see them issuing from beneath your roof—you who are placed here by the government of your country to teach the truth, and to oppose all the machinations of the Father of Lies?' The parson was silent. At last he said confidently—'The truth is, it is my wife's doings.'

"Your wife and you are one—know you not *that*—and

that her doings in this matter are *your* doings? If you knew that she was a devil in human form, and that she was united to you merely that she might drag you into hell, would you not resist her efforts?

"Whenever they met, conversations in this strain took place. The parson, at last, whenever he saw Father ——— coming, began to play the fool, and before the year was at an end, it was understood that he was in a lunatic asylum. The priest, in his own defence, repeated in substance the conversations which had taken place between them, otherwise, I should have supposed that he had talked like a demon, for the wife gave a very different account of their conferences, from this."

The visitor here informed the doctor that Father ——— was an intimate friend of his, and a man he highly respected. "He left the world," said he, "and began to prepare for the priesthood somewhat late in life, hence the limited nature of his education; hence, too, the roughness of his manners. But in the world there is not, I will venture to say, an honester heart than his. He is an incarnation of truth. Hence, he never speaks but he cuts deep, and the deeper because he is a *rough* diamond. It was the same with the holy apostles, and especially St. Peter."

At this moment their conversation was interrupted by a loud whistle, which came from the room in which Mrs. Cowley was confined.

"That," said the doctor, hurriedly, "is for me—excuse me for a short time." The priest, however, having seen and heard enough, took his leave now, and was presently seated in the fly that had brought him to ———.

It was from her husband, and at his request, he had come to pay the visit to Mrs. Cowley.

Recently, and for the first time, Captain Cowley had admitted to himself the possibility of those humble physicians being right, who, six years ago, had enraged him by maintaining that his wife's madness was produced by the presence, in her soul, of an evil spirit; and he had, accordingly, gradually brought himself to the resolve to have her examined by a priest. The Rev. F. ———, however, had found himself a good deal perplexed; but ultimately concluded that the

grounds were insufficient for attributing the distressing symptoms to Satanic agency. A letter, written by Mrs. Cowley, which the manager of the asylum had given him, as a psychological curiosity, was read by Captain Cowley with lively interest.

“Alas !” said he, when he had finished it, “this is but a confirmation of what I always feared,—that my poor wife yielded too much to that proud preference of her own offspring, which constitutes the sin of so many parents who are apparently good in all other respects. God, in his infinite goodness, seems to have visited her by a punishment singularly fitting the nature of her offence. I now feel fully convinced that the derangement is the work of heaven, and that it is but an overshadowing for sanctification’s sake.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Though all the East did quake to hear
Of Alexander's dreadful name ;
And all the West did likewise fear
To hear of Julius Cæsar's fame ;
Yet both by death in dust now lie :
Who, then, can 'scape but he must die ?

If none can 'scape Death's dreadful dart ;
If rich and poor his beck obey ;
If strong, if wise, if all do smart,
Then I to 'scape shall have no way :
Then grant me grace, O God ! that I
My life may mend, since I must die.

R. SOUTHWELL, S.J.

Nor a very great distance from the then rising watering-place of L——n, but in a situation so retired, that when there the visitor found his thoughts almost forcibly withdrawn from the more populous haunts of men, and directed to the past, or fixed on the various symbols that there presented themselves of an invisible world, stood the house in which Captain Cowley had resided almost the whole of the five years which had elapsed since his return to England. The road nearest to which this habitation stood communicated with the high-road, which it left at a right angle, about half a quarter of a mile from the spot. From this road, the external appearance of the house was so peculiar, that a stranger could scarcely pass it without pausing a moment to conjecture whether a farm-house, a manor-house, or a mad-house, would be its proper designation, so little about it was there, excepting a small cross at one end of the long roof, to apprise him of its true character. The front was unusually long, and the windows on one side were somewhat larger than those on the other ; but the only entrance, a small green door, was so expressive of privacy and retirement, that if the windows suggested the thought of "a place of public worship," it was instantly displaced by a conviction that it was now no longer doing duty in that way. In reality, however, the Catholic pastor of a flock scattered over a circuit of ten miles, had here his chapel and his own domicile beneath the same roof. A predecessor of the owner of the estate on which the chapel

stood, had settled it, by a lease of ninety-nine years, at a nominal rent, on the Vicar Apostolic of the district ; but the endowment was scanty, and the house and chapel, consequently, had stood for years untouched by the trowel, the chisel, or the brush. The building was of red brick, with a tiled roof, barn-shaped, the gables being at the lateral extremities. It stood in a garden, the greater part of which lay in front and at the sides, a wide gravel-path, nearly one hundred and fifty yards in length, connecting the road-side gate with the door. On entering the house, the stranger was astonished at the depth of the interior, which was at once discovered by the length of the passage, or hall of entrance, which, however, was narrow, low, and dark, the staircase occupying a corner in the distance. The latter was wide enough ; with wooden banisters, the top painted black, being as broad as the tire of a stagewaggon-wheel, and utterly useless on that very account, because no hand could grasp it. A number of old pictures crowded the surrounding walls ; and along the passages which presented themselves above-stairs, extending right and left, pictures by old painters, if not old *masters*, still continued to line the walls. But, for some reason or other, the most enthusiastic lover of old pictures would rather have found himself deprived of his enthusiasm by the sight of these numerous efforts of art, than inspired with the hope of presently finding among them a hidden treasure. It was the same with the library, which no one but a controversialist in search of authorities would ever have approached. The books appeared petrified by neglect. They had an uninteresting and worthless look, which a Dolman only could have overcome by the powerful appliances of a new binding, and the inscription within of his elevating price. It would be going out of our way to inquire who put these pictures and books where they now appeared, or who furnished the house. It might all have been done out of charity—no doubt it was ; but the benefactor was at least no prophet, or he would never have bestowed a book on those shelves or a picture on those walls. They were worse than worthless in the eyes of most of those who visited the house, and, strange to say, in none more so than in those of the successive resident missionaries, who usually brought their own books, their own furniture, and their own pictures. And yet is this

exactly the sort of place for a thinker—on the principle, however, of which Johnson considered himself to be the consistent follower, when he gave his preference to a room in London looking on a blank wall, as a locality for meditation, to a cottage in the country commanding a charming view. Books and pictures are the very life of minds which are social in their lucubrations ; but the speculative writer needs little more than the sight of them, and is even injured by much reading.

Captain Cowley, however, came here neither to write nor to read, but to exercise his patience, and advance himself somewhat in the science of the saints. There was nothing else left for him to do, as it seemed to him ; nor can *we* see how any man living upon his half-pay as a captain in the navy, with his wife in a madhouse, one son lost, and the other fixed by an unbroken round of engagements as a teacher of Italian in London, could enjoy himself.

A monk, too, would have found himself well off among these books and pictures, which, since the death of their owner, had ceased to say anything, excepting *memento mori*, but by this means became a hundred times more useful than they would, had they continued to remain reading only. The present pastor never looked at them, but rather strove to be insensible of their presence. With an aunt, who acted as his housekeeper, he occupied a small parlour furnished by themselves, and, excepting his bed-room, which had also been refurnished by himself, he never entered any other room in the house. Captain Cowley, who was boarded in the same house at a very moderate charge, was content to use the furniture found in the room which had been opened for his accommodation. Neither did *he* feel the same repugnance to the books and the pictures, though they were far from proving actually attractive to him. For when he had come to this house, it was with the fullest conviction that there he was to terminate his career, and that the preparation of his soul for death was the only serious occupation which was fitted for him. He scarcely, therefore, took cognizance of the house, and read nothing with much attention but the *Officium Parvum* B. V. M., and his daily meditation.

It was not till the book appeared to which we have before referred, that the faculties of his mind were once more

directed to matters more immediately concerning the living. His refutation of that book had been begun in a spirit of humility as an offering testifying his devotion to the interests of truth. It concerned him little to inquire what its effects might be, provided he could reasonably hope that the intention with which it was written corresponded with the designs of Divine providence. Since the publication of this work he had on several other occasions thought it right to strike publicly in defence of the truth; and on these occasions, following the dictates of his own spirit, set upon the working out of its salvation with fear and trembling, he usually threw into his controversy suggestions of a kind that never failed to leave the reader, if a Protestant, in a state of great uneasiness. He ever showed that he defended the truth, because it was the light of the world which the devil was constantly, and in every corner of the world, endeavouring to blow out, that men might die in the outer darkness. There was, at the same time, a wide difference between his and that mock anxiety with which the enemies of the truth are so fond of accompanying their attacks on the tenets of its true representatives; for the fear-inspiring element in his compositions was a purely accidental accompaniment, as far as he was concerned; and because it appeared as such, the reader imagined always it was his own discovery, and took it so much the more on that account to heart.

Among the many souls that were influenced in this way by his letters, none were more mysteriously impressed by them than the Butwells. Sir Francis had gradually, but in secret, so far yielded to their influence, that he dreaded now an interview with their author. Being, however, an honourable man, he could not refrain from writing a note to him when he found himself resident for a time, for health's sake and change of scene, with his wife and daughter at L——n. The reply was as follows:—

“DEAR BUTWELL,—I so rarely go out now, and am become so poor a pedestrian, that I shall venture to pray to be excused for not answering your note in person. Yet I long to see you, and hope you will make my present abode the terminus of your next morning drive, bringing the ladies with you.

“I am,” &c.

On the following morning, a short while before mid-day, the Butwells' carriage appeared in front of the old mission-house just described, and in the next minute the captain was welcoming his old friends. He was not himself aware of it, but his affectionate manner and the altered expression of his countenance, arising from the severe religious exercises in which he had been perpetually engaged during the last five years, awakened so lively a feeling of pity in the hearts of his visitors that they could hardly return his cheerful greeting in the same tone. They thoroughly misunderstood him, and looked upon him as a loser for the very reason that should have drawn from them congratulations; but, as far as they were concerned, it was quite as well that it was so: for by commiseration they united their hearts to him, and unwittingly participated, to a certain extent, in that grace of indifference to the world around, which caused in him those appearances they had commiserated.

There was a great deal of conversation, but it was not until the ladies had been withdrawn by the pastor for a walk in the garden, that Sir Francis ventured to put questions respecting the state of Mrs. Cowley's mind, and to inquire the cause, or supposed occasion, of her derangement.

"I believe," said Captain Cowley, "the excitement, which begun first the evening we last had the pleasure of seeing you at the Villa Algorouki, would have passed away immediately, had not Willibald chosen to leave us as he did. She gradually grew worse after that; and when at last your letters appeared, and all chance of his return seemed to be gone, unmistakeable signs of insanity made their appearance, and she has required restraint ever since."

Although, in most respects, the affairs of his soul were in a much healthier condition than formerly, the peculiar and unjustifiable view he had taken from the first of so much of his son Willibald's conduct as was, in reality, inexplicable to him had only become more pronounced and settled by time. Why this had never been submitted to the scrutiny of a director, along with a multitude of ideas which had been radically modified, with the help of a spiritual guide, to a conformity with the doctrine of perfection, is what every reader will wonder at who has not had an opportunity of observing how obstinately the affections, when once their ordinary action

has been interfered with and deranged, resist the influence of sanctifying grace. He could see plainly enough, with the letter before him that had recently been brought from the lunatic asylum, in what way his wife had sinned with reference to her son; but he had yet to learn that Heaven was reading him a lesson, too, by the instrumentality of the same son. Sir Francis Butwell was the first person to make him dubious of the propriety of the sentiments which had reconciled him now, for so many years, to the state of estrangement in which he had lived with reference to this son.

There was something in the countenance of the last speaker which suggested the question that immediately followed.

"And what has become of Willibald?"

"I have neither seen nor heard of him from that time to this; under the impression that by his flight he was cancelling every debt but that which I daily pay to God for him on my knees."

"You Catholics are strange people," replied Sir Francis with great animation. "Such conduct with us would be thought dreadfully unfeeling; but I perceive you make a merit of acting as you have done. Six years of uncertainty about the fate of a son would have made my search known to every quarter of the globe. Dear me! I came here in the hopes of having an opportunity of saying in person how deeply I regret having written those slanderous letters about him. This is not as it *should* be between such a father and such a son. You should meet. I don't believe you know your own. It is only lately that I have begun to see his worth. Now, I am going to Italy this autumn,—let me see if I can't find him, and bring him back to you. There is nothing in this world, depend upon it, so likely to bring your wife to her senses again as the sight of her Willibald."

Nothing seems so aptly to illustrate the nature of the joy that will be experienced by the souls of the blessed, on being reunited to their bodies at the general resurrection, as the sort of delight which was manifested by Captain Cowley, as his friend inspired him with the hope of being able once again to love, as he once had loved, the amiable Willibald,—once again, before his departure from this world, to converse, as of

old, with his wife, and to hear her talking with her sons; because during the last two or three years the soul and the affections of the recluse had had no joys in common, and so had, in effect, been dead to one another. The irradiation of the features caused by this descent of the soul, which so pressed upon all those organs which are employed to make visible the jubilation thereof as to cause the eyes to overflow with tears, re-acted inspiringly upon Sir Francis, determining him on the spot to make his *amend* for the injury he had inflicted on the Cowleys' name by going at once to — with the view of seeking Willibald, in order to bring about a meeting between him and his parents.

"I will certainly go," he continued, "and, depend upon it, if he is still living and in Italy, I shall find him. I should, however, be provided with a letter——"

"Nothing, I fear, that I could say would move him."

"Still you must write, if it be only to state that I am in your confidence."

"I might," replied the other, after a pause, and thoughtfully, "I might send him"—the remainder of the observation, during some minutes of silent rumination, was suspended: he then continued, "Yes—it would, at least, do no harm. I have a letter already written—by his mother—I will send him that. But conceal it effectually from the custom-house officers. It is not a document one would wish to have read by them; and you will excuse me for sending it sealed."

The captain rose for the purpose of preparing the letter; but his friend representing that there was no hurry—that it was not till near the end of the ensuing month that they would start, their conversation was resumed.

"I have read everything you have published lately in defence of your religion," continued Sir Francis, "and, to a certain extent, have profited by it. If you have failed, as yet, to convince me that everybody ought to embrace the Catholic faith, you have strengthened my faith in Christianity in general, and have communicated to me something of that part of your religion which a Protestant and Catholic should possess in common, viz. the fear of God."

"May it prove as serviceable to you as it has to me," replied the captain. "It is certainly the beginning of wis-

dom. I only wish now it had taken possession of my heart years ago."

"For me," said Sir Francis, "it has yet to do much. Its power is small at present, and soon becomes paralyzed by the presence of other passions, which are not so easily converted into helps to pious aspirations. Since the prorogation of Parliament I have experienced, for the first time in my life, a very small abatement of the relish I have usually had for my ordinary avocations, as one whose lot is cast with the providers of the national safety. The debates arising from the progress of the Catholic Emancipation Bill have given me a deeper insight into the human heart than I ever had before. I have become, in consequence, more distrustful both of myself and of others than I was before. Alas! few, I fear, know, from the testimony of deep experience, how difficult it is to be as honest in thought as one may be in action. A man may serve the State well, as Wolsey did Henry VIII., or Nelson his country, and yet be playing the knave all the while to his God. Men like (I will even say for instance) the Duke of Wellington, whose character I literally revere—how deeply do they deceive themselves and their admirers! They are careful in ascertaining what they owe to their neighbours, and pay their debts in this direction with admirable exactitude, but what they owe to their Creator they never even take the trouble to inquire."

"Dealing with Him," continued the Captain, "like the man with one talent, who went and digged into the *earth*, and hid his lord's money; because their thoughts, like his, are uncharitable:—'Thou art hard. Thou reapest where thou hast not sown, and gatherest where thou hast not strewed.' For these words are the proper interpretation of that extraordinary conduct which implies a notion that piety is for women and children only."

Sir Francis made no reply. Silence ensued, and the friends began to feel that, for the present, they had seen enough of each other. They were neither of them fond of serious conversation, and at present no topic of common interest presented itself. But the captain would not suffer his guests to depart until they had paid a visit to the chapel, and partaken of an early dinner in company with the pastor and his aunt.

No men in the world understand so well how to make themselves agreeable, as it is called, to persons occupying the position of Sir Francis Butwell as priests. This is simply because, from a frequent study of their own, they understand generally the dispositions of others; and also because, whether actually humble or not, they are intimately acquainted with every symptom of pride, and usually manage to keep their own conversation free from the least sign thereof. A scrupulous attention to the precept "Honour to whom honour is due," is another observance which distinguishes their demeanour—rendering it at once soothing and edifying; nor should a third be omitted,—their cordiality, resulting from the constant practice of resisting the temptation to form judgments of people's motives, which leads, among the majority of the members of civilized society, to so much presumption on the one side, and irritation on the other. Sir Francis talked little, but he frequently eyed the pastor, and payed marked attention to everything he said. A few unimportant observations were all that left his lips, in addition to a short account he gave of the origin of the mission. As it commonly happens, words do the least on occasions of this sort—the presence—the spirit—is everything; and in the present instance it was this, and this alone, which so operated on Sir Francis as to lead him to speak thus, as the carriage slowly conveyed the visiting party back to L——n:—

"I call that a nook of the world. If you hadn't seen him, you would never believe that such a man as that priest existed. Still, when you see him, you seem to have known him all your life. How different a thing Catholicity here appears from Catholicity in Italy! Here so quiet, so retired, so mysterious, yet sincere; there, equally flaunting, noisy, imperious, and meretricious. And yet it is essentially the same religion. Ah, ha! another striking illustration this of the error which so many of our co-religionists commit, in judging of the temper of the Catholic religion by the manners of the people among whom it is established, and whose manners it is ever labouring, I suppose, to mend, to modify, to purify. The right way to judge of a religion is to judge of it as you may of the natural disposition of a human being, by what he does when left to himself. If a young man who, surrounded by his boon companions, becomes so much one of them that

he seems then as bad as the most profligate there, when left to himself seems to loathe what he has heretofore seemed to delight in, and, without any effort, betakes himself to a quiet, sober life, we all at once perceive that the *natural* disposition of this young man is the very reverse of what we thought it before. The Catholic Church is constrained by the world to wear an appearance contrary to her own temper, which can only be properly understood by those who, like ourselves to-day, have had an opportunity of following it into a place of retirement."

Sophia objected that the Catholic Church was too compliant.

"If," replied her father, "we are to ascribe to her weakness all the liberties we see her children taking with her precepts, I grant she is. But if the continuance of her outward connection with the disobedient members of the flock arise from her extreme patience and unwillingness to lose one by any proceeding of her own, then what must we say and think of her?"

Sophia made no reply.

"By the way," continued Sir Francis, "I told Cowley we were going this autumn to Italy."

"What made you do that?" inquired his wife.

"It wasn't a lie, at all events, but merely news for myself as well as him. The fact is, I feel rather jaded, and, methinks, a breath of Italian air will cleanse my foul bosom of the perilous stuff that weighs upon my heart. I want to go to a place where I can meet a melancholy Jacques, to show me that though now, like adversity, I am becoming in my own eyes ugly and venomous, I have yet a precious jewel in me somewhere, even a soul to save."

"My spirit is also becoming very sordid," said Sophia, "and the airs of Algorouki—alas! never now, I fear, to be breathed again by any of us—constitute the sort of change I want. That is, I want to converse with people absurdly innocent and stuffed full of superstition; for I pine in thought, letting concealment, owing to the excessive materiality of Englishmen, fill me up with a huge indigestible mass of reflections, which would fly off there, bright and rapid as bubbles blown by a boy, at the instance of such companions as the Cowleys."

"What led to my saying we were going to Italy, was the sudden idea that the sight of her son Willibald might have the effect of restoring Mrs. Cowley to her senses. Cowley evidently liked it when I submitted it to him. I then begged to be allowed to seek him, adding, with the view of lessening the weight of the obligation he might conceive himself placed under by a consent, that I was already engaged to visit Italy in the course of the ensuing autumn."

"What did he say to your proposition?"

"I never saw a man look happier in my life," replied her husband. "He accepted it with avidity."

"Well," said Lady Butwell, with an expression flatteringly approving, "I think you owed them this service, and that you have done nobly in engaging to make the attempt."

To obviate repetition, we transcribe here the contents of the letter which Captain Cowley, at the request of Sir Francis, wrote to his son.

"MY DEAR SON,—In entire ignorance of your present position, and not morally certain even that you live, I am writing this letter in but a faint hope that it will meet your eye; and even this small amount of hope is more pressing me from another than a growth of my own mind.

"You will remember our friend Sir Francis Butwell. Considerable changes have taken place in his ideas since you knew him, and, amongst other things, he regrets having written certain letters in the *Times* newspaper, in which your sudden disappearance, as if from fear, as it seemed to all of us, of being constrained to give information that might lead to the discovery of the retreat of the robber Carmen Festa, was ascribed to a very culpable weakness on your part, and to the influence of a designing clergy. You will, in all probability, have seen these letters yourself.

"For myself, though I have often reflected on your inexplicable proceedings subsequent to your re-appearance after your long and mysterious absence, I have never been able to get rid of the unfavourable impression they left on my mind. But your desertion of the paternal roof was the action I have since had the strongest reason to believe done at the instigation of our common enemy, inasmuch as, through it, your poor mother, who never recovered from the shock she sus-

tained on the night of July —, 18—, was gradually reduced to a state which made it absolutely necessary to place her in an asylum. There she has been ever since. I rarely visit her myself, because the sight of me seems only productive of mischief, but a priest, the Rev. ———, with whom I board and lodge, sees her several times in the course of the year. I inclose you an affecting letter of hers. Some time since an 'evangelical' M.D. got hold of some of the particulars relating to your poor mother's case, and published a book, in which he strove to connect the derangement of her reasoning faculties with the abuse of priestly power, &c. I wrote an answer, and ever since have been very frequently forced to take up the mighty instrument of little men in defence of the principles and practices of our holy religion. But these efforts are extremely hurtful to me in a variety of ways, and I am now constantly expecting an attack of sickness, that shall at once put an end to my scribblings and my life. Simon has been gaining his livelihood by giving lessons in Italian in London, and your mother and I are both indebted to him for a yearly help of a pecuniary nature which, with my half-pay, constitutes our sole means of support at present.

"I can hardly understand that you can be in ignorance of it, and yet can I not attribute to anything but such ignorance your silence, at a time when we needed so much the consolation afforded by filial sympathy. I allude to our loss of the property, which was the realization of every halfpenny of our united capitals at the time. According to the direction of the deed of settlement, it was sold to us on the apparent failure of male heirs—such an heir being all the while living. We were young and inexperienced at the time that we purchased, and failed to get the title examined by a skilful lawyer; so conspicuous, indeed, became our imprudence during the progress of the suit, that neither I nor any of my best friends could wonder at the sentence which condemned it. Before we left, too, we had a thousand reasons, equally awful and mysterious in their nature, for concluding that we were intruders where we had so long fondly imagined ourselves absolute proprietors.

"These were of a piece with the memorable event from which dates your mother's misfortune—the opening to you of the door

of the room we had never before been able to enter ; for here, under the bed, was found a box containing a document, which confirmed to me every statement made by those employed to substantiate the claim of my opponent, and which I ultimately delivered into their hands. It was necessary that the father of the heir should be identified with a person reported to have died in a foreign land, whose wife, before her own death—which took place shortly afterwards, in the same place—had declared him to be such and such a person : adding, at the same time, what she said would in all probability, at some time or other, serve to prove the truth of this statement—the exact date of the birth of the deceased. The document referred to, enumerating the children of the first proprietor of the estate—the apostate friar—contained the name she gave, mentioning the day on which the child was born, and which was the same as that reported by her.

“ But, my dear son, my uncertainty about this point must no longer be allowed to paralyze that affection which charity is now urging me to declare and express, by commissioning, at his own request, Sir Francis Butwell, who is just going to Italy to see you, with the view of endeavouring to induce you to pay us a visit, his impression being, that your sudden re-appearance might have a very beneficial effect on your poor mother’s mind.

“ But now, my dear son, I must say adieu.

“ Believe me, your affectionate Father,

“ WALTER COWLEY.”

CHAPTER XXXV.

HER affair with Carmen Festa had had a very peculiar effect on the character of Sophia Butwell. When the thirst for vengeance had subsided, a determination never to wed another remained in its place. This, however, did not altogether result from a lingering fondness for Carmen, but from her disinclination to accept the sympathies of those who had witnessed her disappointment and his villany. She chose to place all of the opposite sex who now approached her in the character of admirers under the same category with the man whose place they strove to take; by which device she was able, without the slightest difficulty, to keep her heart entirely disengaged. The activity of her mind, however, induced an inclination to play a while, like the cat, with each successive suitor, before she finally dismissed him; and no one ever heard her say she was not going to marry at all. Thus she had by degrees come to be regarded as an excessively capricious person, and she believed herself to be the victim of caprice; whereas, the real foundation of her apparent fastidiousness was the wound that bled yet, and would not be healed quite, which she had received in her rencontre with Carmen's iron will and rapacious mind.

It has been mentioned before, that since the breaking off of that match she had devoted more of her time to intellectual pursuits. What Protestants call *belief* is, in fact, nothing more than a defect in their philosophy. We remember once reading some pages of a treatise on psychology, in which *faith* was treated as a faculty—a *fourth* faculty—of the soul. First, with the Church, were enumerated the three—will, memory, and understanding; then came the new discovery, the fourth, which the writer called *faith*. Faith, viewed in this way, however, is precisely the excrescence whose runnings constantly dim the eye of the Protestant soul; it is, in other words, the source of mysticism and the transcendentalism of Carlyle and Emerson. As nothing better fits a person for the reception of true faith than an unclouded state of the understanding, so nothing is more in the way of the formation

of correct ideas about God and his Divine providence than this psychological cancer which Protestants call faith.

Sophia Butwell would have been by this time deeply skilled in natural philosophy had she not inherited the disease which stood equally in the way of her participation in the privileges, common to every true believer, of being a spouse of Christ; not that in her this evil was so great as to be quite beyond the power of the understanding to express it in rational terms. It only went so far as to influence her tastes as a reader, and to give her a relish for writers in what is somewhat ambiguously called the *German style*.

Her imagination had also been rendered somewhat morbid by an undue indulgence in the habit of *thinking*; which, like the philosopher's stone, she constantly expected to supply her with the golden knowledge of things to come. Unfortunately for her, she had selected for her female confidant a young lady whose intellectual endowments were greatly inferior to her own, or whose aims, at least, fell short, by an incalculable distance, of the objects which were chiefly contemplated by Sophia. It was, however, precisely this *déagagé* character of her friend's mind which formed for Sophia its attraction. Writing to her was like writing in an empty book gifted with understanding, and a mysterious power of reciprocation. Thus, her speculations, which rarely became tangible to other minds in any save the form of confidential scribblings to her "dear Emily," had time to acquire the character of opinions and tenets.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE Butwells on their own ground in England were very great people indeed. It would have been strange if they had not been so, because it seldom happens that a family presents in visible union so many claims to the respect of the world. For here were united "family," wealth, good taste, talent, and *physique*: beauty in the daughter, comeliness and dignity in the mother, and stature, accompanied by athletic vigour, in the father. Besides, Sir Francis, though not very bright, was strong even in the House, having held his seat for twelve years, and being one of the most public-spirited men in the country. The reader will guess in a minute what the consequences of all this were with respect to Sophia. In the eyes of the female sex, high and low, in those parts, she was the most important person by far. They never forgot her. Her image rested with the fixity of a cliff on the horizon of the reflections of nearly all of them. In their view, she was never destined to grow old or *passée*. They *heard* of other great beauties and stars; but they knew, and they cared for, none but her. Girls of the most opposite tastes agreed in their ideas about Sophia. Even the poetesses thought her clever, and confessed themselves "afraid" of her. This admiration, however, deep as it was, would not have lasted long, had not distance been constantly operating between her and her friends to "lend enchantment to the view." The family seldom remained at home for longer than two months at a time, and then they pretended to be in retreat, though, in fact, they came home only to become the abroad of others.

It often happens, that those in the apparent enjoyment of an enviable reputation, can still hardly be said to *enjoy* it, inasmuch as they are without the means of testing its quality, and suffer accordingly something in the same strange way in which we may suppose him afflicted who ordered for his relief that the exact amount of the population of his people should be ascertained. Sophia Butwell was exposed to no such affliction. Her friend and relative, Emily Wortley, stood here "the friend indeed," and most judiciously did she perform her part, because, though distasteful matters were care-

fully strained out of her reports, a flavour of them was retained to correct the mawkish relish of unmitigated flattery. Nor was Emily her sole ally. Sophia had many female friends who secretly gloried in the fidelity with which they *served*, *i. e.*, collected whatever was calculated to feed the generous—in her case a strictly applicable epithet—flame of self-love. Every soul, though itself a satellite, is the centre of a constellation;—the constellation of which Sophia was the centre consisted of all the prettiest, the most intellectual, or the most “spirited” young ladies in the neighbourhood in which she was born. Without being fully conscious of it, perhaps, she gave herself a good deal of trouble to correspond with the high expectations thus magnanimously entertained of her; and this not the less because she was frequently absent from home, inasmuch as she constantly found that her home reputation, spread abroad by the tongues of servants and touring friends, had a stability and dogmatic odour which could never attach to that which resulted from present appearances and recent performances. Sophia was not *certain*, but she had a shrewd suspicion, and did not in consequence conceal from her left hand what her right wrote, when she indited an epistle to Emily Wortley, that it would pass through many hands. Another branch of the public scattered round —, of which the contemplated mind of our heroine kept a strict account, was composed of clerics. Emily Wortley kept house for a brother who was a parson, and a magistrate too. He was rather a stirring character, having reddish hair, and the ardent temperament of which the former is so frequently an index. Like most men of this stamp, he was fond of breakfasts; and it was, surrounded by some eight of the Protestant clergy of the neighbourhood, at a breakfast-table, that he will make his *début* among our *dramatis personæ*.

“Whilst you are pouring out the tea, shall I read the letter?” said he, in allusion to an unopened epistle directed in the well-known handwriting of Sophia Butwell. “The writer, you must know, boasts of having no secrets, and accuses Goethe of an attempt to clean himself upon the world (an act similar in vileness to that of spitting in a church) because he says somewhere that every one must be conscious of having once done something which, if known, would cause

all the world to hate him : so that every letter she writes is fit, I will not say intended, to be read by everybody."

"Oh, yes, pray read it, and aloud," replied Miss Wortley, who knew from experience that her friend was much too clever a person ever to commit to paper a word that she would regret having written if she were aware that it was destined to meet the eye of all the parsons in the county. Not a syllable was lost by any one of the party as the Rev. Augustus Wortley read the following letter, which was dated L——n.

"DEAREST EMILY,—I refrained, for a very obvious reason, from saying anything of it to you before the present time ; it is nevertheless true, that for the last half-year I have foreseen that we should go to Italy this year, and so have been able to contrive that my father's thoughts should be turned in the proper direction some time previously. I must now mention to you that the following dream visited the glimpses of my slumber on three successive nights about this time. I seemed to see from the shores of Britain the coast of Italy. Near a grotto, opening towards the sea, I beheld a hermit hoary. He wore a brown tunic, and was girt by a cord. His feet were bare, which was lucky, as the sea was constantly washing over them. He was tall, and thin, and aged. The expression of his face was that of Willibald Cowley, and his voice was familiar as my own thoughts. 'Come now,' he said, 'as you have been faithful over a few, and have set at naught the allurements of the proud sons of Britain, you shall be exalted greatly where you were once abased.'

"I should, of course, have thought nothing of this dream, but for its recurrence three nights running. I am, as you know well, far from being superstitious, and it was therefore most cautiously, and on the same principle that some people, when they see something in the dark which looks like a ghost, touch it in order to ascertain that it is no such thing, that I entered upon a closer examination of the tendency of this dream, not doubting that by this means I should discover it to be mere nonsense. Scarcely, however, had I turned my thoughts to it, when I saw that it meant nothing more than this, viz., that a return to Italy was the proper course to be pursued by us in order to regain possession of

those precious particles of dignity which were disengaged from us in the course of our intimacy with my light-fingered lord and master that was to have been. It never occurred to me before, that our departure from the scene of my discomfiture was premature, though I constantly, in consequence, felt reluctant to speak of Italy, and have felt small when I saw that what happened to me there was remembered by the person I was talking with.

“With regard to what you say about my marrying an Englishman, I cannot account for it; but it is nevertheless perfectly true, and no mere fancy. All Englishmen appear to me like sandy deserts. Willibald Cowley is the only Englishman I ever saw anything in that really interested me, and this was a foreign element. They all have a sort of sickly conceit, which makes their very courage appear like a mere piggish obstinacy. What invested ‘the impostor’ with a charm in my eyes at one time, was the superabundance he exhibited of that quality which Englishmen seem to lack. Now, what to call this quality—a sort of raciness resulting from the entire absence of the gregarious instinct. ‘The impostor’ used to descend upon one with the air of a demigod; which air, I presume, can coexist with Christian principles and rigid morals. His fearlessness, though not greater, was more splendid and enchanting than that of any Englishman I ever knew or read of, save and except Richard I. None doubt the courage of the Duke of Wellington, or that of Nelson, or that of ‘Shaw the life-guardsman,’ or that of Cribb the pugilist; still the virtue, as exhibited by them, fails to fascinate my imagination and to touch my sympathies: but about Carmen there was a gay and gentle insolence, and a wrath that was at once towering and good-natured, and that used to push me off my centre completely, until I understood that it had pushed him off *his* centre too, and then, of course, I would have nothing more to say to him. But what! do you suppose that my acquaintance with such a man as Carmen has diminished my distaste for the English style? On the contrary, it has increased it a hundredfold; and if I do not fall in again with another ‘impostor,’ I shan’t marry till I’m fifty-six, and my face like tan, and then ‘a nice little dog’s-meat-man’ will do for me as well as anybody else.

"We shall return home to prepare for our journey on Tuesday, and you will ride over early the same day, and stay till the next morning—a shorter stay would not suffice for the loads of things I have to say, to ask, and to hear.

"Yours," &c.

The intention of the Butwells to leave England in the course of the autumn had already been announced, but the origin of the thought had not yet been divulged. No sermon of the reverend reader had ever been listened to with the marked attention which was paid to him on the present occasion ; for there was a reality about everything that came from Sophia's pen, which provoked attention in spite of the style and tone, savouring, as they so often did, of good-for-nothingness.

A difficulty is sometimes experienced in tracing to its true source that imposing appearance of confidence in the faultlessness of their position, which is conspicuous in the bearing, preaching, and conversation of so many of the clergy of the Protestant Church, and is so often mistaken for the light of faith. But when it is recollected that these appearances assume a still more imposing form in the manners and language of professed worldlings, faith, it will be seen at once, has nothing to do with the production of them. Faith, indeed, as all who have received that precious gift can testify, is not attended with the feelings which give rise to these appearances ; for, not being a part of our being, but simply a light from the Divinity, which has been grasped by our intellect, and is retained by the help of the memory and the will, we dare speak but *of* it, lest, in punishment of the deception we should be practising, were we to pretend that it is an innate conviction, it should suddenly be withdrawn from us.

All the party now present, with one exception, were men who revelled and *shone* in their ignorance ; they reflected *brightly* in all they said, and preached what the world of each presented to him : they never used the Bible but as a *weapon*. *Physician heal thyself*, was a word they only uttered when they desired to rebut a censure, and never beheld, but to apply it instantly in thought to somebody, to whom, perhaps, it was much less applicable than to themselves.

"I thought how it would be," said the brother of Sophia's *confidante*. "I have marked her ways sufficiently of late to feel the utmost anxiety on her account. However, *my* duty, I believe, has been amply discharged as far as it is concerned with her. I have repeatedly told her," continued the reverend gentleman, looking around as if to be certain that all were attentive, whilst he revealed the particulars of those *quasi* confessions, which an impertinent censure of her intention had occasionally elicited even from Miss Butwell, "that the feeling of distaste for the blessings of guidance would, if encouraged, result in a state of the judgment so morbidly critical, that at last she would grow disgusted with her own judgments, and find relief only in acting without judgment. In all my life, I think I never met with a person so totally devoid of Christian meekness as Sophia Butwell. One of her fads, of late, has been a practice of writing to my sister refutations of my arguments in defence of the principles of the Protestant religion. I think you may see in her what is mostly the style of a person the devil best succeeds in entangling in the web of Romanism."

"Yes, because these are the sort of persons in whom common sense is strongest."

"Now for one of Marsham's paradoxes," said the first speaker, sticking his fork into a pork-chop.

"The principles and the practices of Protestantism are diametrically opposed to the dictates of common sense," persisted the other.

"Then why do you remain a Protestant?"

The Rev. Mr. Marsham, who was too full of thought to be able quickly—though he did it slowly—to follow the dictates of common sense himself, made no reply to the question, but continued, "These souls are not to be held by cobwebs—by a net made by an insect like themselves; consequently, when straitened, they do not wait to untie the knots, but break through Protestantism, and escape, too, without a trace in the conscience of their former servitude."

"Oh, oh!"

"Because," continued Mr. Marsham, leaning back in his chair and playing unconcernedly with his tea-spoon, "we really have no right to them; our binding, therefore, is not carried on to the soul, and will not appear in heaven. I'll

tell you what you appear in the eyes of Miss Butwell, even before the light of faith has entered her mind and made the matter clear,—a jolly fellow, dressed in black, with a white choker, trying hard to impose upon her, by making it appear that God has sent you to be her guide in spiritual matters; why, therefore, should she be so deceitful, as to pretend to think you what you wish her to think you? In the mean time, you must not expect to hear her uttering heavenly things before her feet are treading the way of salvation. She, like you, is in the world, the only difference is, that you are a parson there, and she is an heiress. I should like to see a race between you: at the same time, I am ready to bet twenty pounds to one farthing that Sophia gets first into the Church."

At this there was a roar of laughter.

"Upon my word, all things considered," said a clean, well-fed, laughing-looking, quick-speaking little parson, "I think, Wortley, you cannot do better than make a match of it, and marry the heiress; and if you do, I'll be your groom and jock too."

The laughter continued loud and long, whilst the eyes of the Rev. Augustus Wortley sparkled in such a way, as to show that he was not altogether a stranger to the thought.

"Marry HIM," continued Mr. Marsham—"Miss Butwell marry Wortley! she would as soon marry the devil himself—and, of course, sooner, if she is one of those who think it is better to reign in hell than serve in heaven. As there is nothing in the world that the devil despises so much as the men he has ruined, so, sympathizing with him, is there nothing living that his spouses so much nauseate as these, their miserable fellow-creatures. No, believe me, there isn't half devil enough in Wortley for Miss Butwell. That is evident from the letter we have just heard read. Hers is a great soul,—one of the sort—I heard this the other day from a friend, who was reporting a sermon he had heard in the Catholic chapel at L——n. It illustrates the way in which the clergy belonging to that Church seek, by all sorts of ways, to lead souls to God. It places their honesty as preachers in a favourable light; because the artifice has, it must be admitted, more of power than grace. The man told a story

(intended also to serve as an exemplification of the condescension of our Lord, who, whilst he seeks first the lowly and the poor in spirit, is not above approaching the high-minded with a bearing suiting their tastes) of a very haughty dame, a great beauty, rich, and of high rank, who, tired with refusing offers and discouraging admirers, gave out at last that a crowned head alone would satisfy her. Disgusted at the pride and ambition manifested by this language, the world around began to cool in its devotion; and when she went into public, expecting to dazzle, she was somewhat mortified at finding how common pride is, and how impossible it is to please those who know they are not to reap a reward for their smiles. The dame now took to moping, and was understood to be a prey to a magnificent sort of melancholy. There was a faded picture in her room, one by an 'old master'—let us imagine it a Morales—representing Christ crowned with thorns. When she had become disgusted with the world, she began to discover, in the following gaze of this picture, the expression of a kindred spirit; but she did not deign yet to listen to the wooing even of this lover,—she hurried by him, and stuck firmly to her moping for weeks and months. At last, sometimes as she endeavoured to divert her thoughts from painful topics by working, she would every now and then, in a spirit of derision, mutter the words to herself,—‘a crowned head!’ She was ashamed of her pride, and yet ashamed to lower her colours. One day, when this mood was very strong upon her, and she was smiling from the intensity of the feeling of contempt she entertained for herself, she raised her head, and said, with more emphasis than usual,—‘a crowned head!’ Her eyes, at the same time, encountered those of the picture, and, suddenly, a ray of heavenly light informed her that the Lord of heaven and earth had listened to her vow, and was the King crowned *with thorns* she was to wed. I need scarcely add the rest—that she became a nun, &c.”

“How you can admire such clap-trap!” commenced the Rev. Augustus Wortley; but he was again interrupted by his friend Marsham, who, fixing his eyes on him, said, “I quoted the story merely to illustrate my meaning, in saying of Miss Butwell that hers is a great soul; by which, of course, I do not also intend to predicate aught concerning her

eternal destiny. I only think she is sure not to marry a parson."

The speaker rose as he spoke, and, ringing the bell, ordered his horse. Emily Wortley shortly afterwards set out on her pony alone to spend the day with her friend, whom, after a ride of four or five miles, she met riding in the company of a Russian nobleman, who was paying a visit to her father. After the usual greeting, and an introduction that placed Emily Wortley and the Russian on conversable terms, Sophia said,—

"Excuse me, love, but you interrupted a very interesting conversation—interesting to *me*, that is to say. Baron Baseski was explaining to me the nature of the relation in which the Czar stands to the Church. I call him anti-Pope, and am so stupid that, as yet, I have not been able to understand that in religious matters the authority he claims and exercises is not one whit less arbitrary than that of the Pope. The King of England's must necessarily be less, because the Church itself, of which he is the head, does not profess to be infallible; but the Church of Russia does, and, of course, it would never be admitted as a possibility by a Czar that he could err in any matter that should come to be the subject of polemical disagreement between himself and his bishops."

"These are things," said the baron, knitting his brows, "which ladies cannot understand."

"Neither can they understand," continued Sophia, "whence the Emperors of Russia derive the notion that their power is of such a privileged nature that its extension, though at the expense of many minor sceptres, would be a gain to the world."

Baron Baseski either could not, or he didn't choose to make any reply to Sophia's speech. She went on,—

"The very secrecy with which this country endeavours to carry on the investigations necessary for the gradual realization of her favourite project should be regarded by the rest of the world as an indication of the infernal nature of the scheme. England has extended her dominion also, but quite in a different spirit. She has no secrets and no sly designs; and our government never internationally exercises anything beyond a protective power. Even the Pope admits that we are Christian in the use we make of power: whatever abuse of

power we have been guilty of is attributable to stupidity rather than a bad intention. As if to show that in this respect at least we are pretty free from offence, the arms of every nation in Europe but our own were disgraced by the impetuosity of the French in the late war. I do not say this boastingly, for God knows we had work enough to escape a similar fate: it is clear, indeed, that the chastisement inflicted on the other nations was not intended to do more in our regard than to prove that we were then, at least, in favour; and I sincerely hope that we shall be distinguished to the end of the world for the union we have so long exhibited, as one of the great powers of the world, of gentleness, humanity, and bravery."

In this way did Sophia contrive to retain the *parole* to the end of the ride. The Russian had begun; she ended it: he had, unfortunately for himself, fancied that Sophia was one of those "silly women" who could be brought by degrees to admire the figure of the Czar; whereas she had far too much devil in her, herself, to be susceptible of any such impressions: in fact, there is no potentate on the face of the earth she more cordially despised than the Emperor Nicholas. She was thoroughly English in this respect, though in other matters her tastes had become what her friend at the parsonage would have called vitiated.

At this stage of our story, it is fitting that we should indulge the reader with another—it shall be here an equestrian—portrait of our heroine. Sir Francis and she were both excellent judges of horses; she, of course, more as regards shape. When they were last at —— the horse she now rode had been first seen by her father. He resolved on the spot to get hold of it before he left —— . It was a white horse speckled, or flea-bitten: it had a short head, tapering nose, small under-jaw, a broad forehead, a full fiery eye, situated comparatively low in the head, and an expanded nostril: it had a long neck, which became occasionally finely arched, a dead scanty mane, a shoulder that was the very figure of freedom and capacity, a short back, a long rump, which ended with scarcely any depression in a tail that in its carriage corresponded with the character of the arched neck; a full and ample hind-quarter, so formed that it would fill exactly an equilateral triangle; a strong, but flexible hock, long,

and of the same breadth all the way, with a short bone and sinew below, both as hard as iron; a clean fetlock; a long but grasping pastern, and a small compact hoof that seemed made for securing the utmost rapidity of movement; so that walking appeared a pain, though the stride of the hind leg far exceeded that taken by the best roadsters, and forced the fore legs into a movement almost as rapid and lively as a trot. Though now nearly twenty years old, this horse seemed still full of fire and energy; not even had the eye grown duller: yet you could tell by the dry, scanty coat, and the formulated look of every part, that it was an old Arabian Sophia rode. She wore a green habit and a cap. The only change that had taken place in her face since we last described it was that she looked sterner now and less contemptuous, more thoughtful and less modish. Sometimes her countenance resembled more exactly than ever that of Napoleon; all seemed dead within her but the perceptive faculties: she looked as if she understood everything perfectly well, but was pleased with nothing.

Her friend Miss Wortley was tall and thin, but by various contrivances she had given herself a most perplexing appearance. The face and shoulders prepared you for a figure of the kind that pleases by exciting your compassion on account of its excessive fragility. The spirit-like look of it, too, elicits for it a sort of liking; but all these thoughts were disturbed by the appearances below the waist. Here was the form of a stout lady—a very stout lady indeed; here, therefore, of course, ceased the approving train of thought elicited by the sight of the upper woman, whilst a small feeling of contempt began to take its place as you gradually recognised the design of all this artifice. Still Miss Wortley was a most amiable young lady, whose conversation soon dispelled all the unfavourable thoughts the contemplation of her mongrel shape had given rise to. She was extremely good-natured, a very great talker, clever, excitable, affectionate, and *apparently* free from the smallest bit of the love of admiration, though in the secret depths of her heart the constant prey to it; where, too, all sorts of cogitations went on, which, to the casual observer, seemed so wholly foreign to her nature as to beget a feeling of respect that was the death of all those emotions in them which she would not have been so very

sorry to have been the occasion of arousing. Even her friend Sophia Butwell was in complete ignorance of these circumstances, and Emily liked her none the better because she was so. "Dear me!" she would sometimes say, when alone, "why am not I to have the credit of having about me something dangerous?" The politeness of the Russian, who was only seeking to make friends in every direction, began almost immediately to tell on her, and she was distressed beyond measure at the slashing way in which Sophia dealt with all his most cherished prejudices.

END OF PART II.

PART III.—ITALY.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

So fare lukewarm desires in crazy love,
Far off, in need, with feeble foot they train ;
In tides they swim, low ebbs they scorn to prove ;
They seek their friends' delights, but shun their pain.

R. SOUTHWELL, S. J.

THE steamer which conveyed the Butwells from Brighton to Dieppe was full of tourists and invalids, who were migrating on the first appearance of autumnal fogs to the south of Europe. Truly had Sir Francis spoken, in allusion to the salutary fear with which the perusal of Captain Cowley's controversial publications had inspired him, when he said, "For me, it has yet to do much. Its power is small at present, and soon becomes paralyzed by the presence of other passions which are not so easily converted into helps to pious aspirations."

This journey, though undertaken in the first instance from a charitable motive, soon degenerated into a mere tour of pleasure. Amidst the gaieties of Paris the retreat of Captain Cowley was remembered with reluctance, and the promised search after Willibald was only called to mind to be banished immediately afterwards with impatience. Still, as a promise, it acted as the rudder which compelled them on to —, when the society they entered into, during their sojourn in the French capital, had become so attractive that they literally groaned at the thought of leaving it so soon. Strange to say, it was not till they had actually arrived at — that their object in coming was practically forgotten. At least, Sir Francis determined not to commence his inquiries about Willibald till something should occur calculated to invest such inquiry with attractions which it did not now present. The following conversation between Sir Francis and his lady

will enable the reader to judge of the state of their feelings at this period of their lives.

"This is the very last place in the world I should have proposed visiting at this time, had it not been for the offer I so hastily made to Cowley. I am almost ashamed to appear in the streets, so seedy a figure did we cut a short while before we left the place when we were last here."

"I cannot say," replied the wife, "it pleases me either very much; but as our object in coming was a good one, we may confidently hope soon to find ourselves more at ease. I think it would be as well to defer for the present the search for Willibald. If he is anywhere in the neighbourhood, we shall soon hear of him. I wonder whether there are any people here we know."

"I shall boldly sally forth presently and make inquiries, and look at the list of the names of subscribers at the reading-room. By the way, how does Sophia seem to like it? I have never been able to make out what her thoughts are, yet I cannot help thinking she has her cogitations upon the subject as well as we."

"My idea is, that she thinks she is going to do something great here at last. Indeed, she has confessed to me (you will of course make no allusion to it) that she has long had a presentiment of a triumph here, of some kind or other, from which we are all to derive an *éclat* so brilliant that it will shed a lustre even on the past."

These words, so homely and unpremeditated, had yet the magical effect of suddenly restoring all Sir Francis's habitual self-respect, and thereby his usual tranquillity and spirits. He could hardly refrain from smiling as he replied, "The thought is natural enough; she must only take care she doesn't get taken in a second time."

Shortly after this Sir Francis turned out in search of acquaintances and to look at the papers. As he proceeded along the Via, his eye fell on a well-executed engraving in a shop-window, which could not be mistaken for anything else than a representation of the Villa Algorouki. Sir Francis was struck anew with the beauty of the building and its situation. In admiring it, he could not but recur in thought to the misfortunes of the Cowleys, but the thought excited no compassion; his reflection, on the contrary, was, that it was

too splendid a place for such homely people, and that it was, perhaps, quite as well for them that they resided there no longer. These thoughts flowed the more freely that he read at the foot of the engraving the words—

*“ Veduta della Villa del Principe Algarouki,
Ministro delle Finanze, &c. &c. &c.”*

“ By the way,” said he, “ I’ll take this home with me ; it will amuse them : ” and he purchased a copy of it. Advancing further, he noticed the same view in other shops, and on entering the reading-room he beheld it again, framed and hung up. It was a relief to him to observe among the readers then present none he had ever seen before ; and on looking over the subscription-book, he was still further relieved by finding, that not a name under the date of the present year was familiar to him except that of—with what a leap of exultation did his heart accompany the utterance as he read aloud the magic words—*Lord Slothorpe*. “ Is it possible ? ” exclaimed Sir Francis ; “ is he here ? ”

Yes ; Lord Slothorpe had been residing during the last two years at —. And now the reader must learn what Lord Slothorpe was to Sir Francis. He was a person, then, with whom the worthy baronet could never long associate without getting besotted. They had first become acquainted as members of the same regiment, the soldiering of each having been simply of the nature of dilettanteism, and brief in the extreme ; but the friendship begun in this exciting atmosphere retained its interest for both as they advanced in life.

It was the misfortune of Sir Francis to know as little of everybody else’s true disposition as he did of his own ; and now, the instant he came into the presence of this old friend, every faculty within him seemed to fall asleep, excepting that of hearing. Lord Slothorpe was an epicurean, of English tastes. He had so little religion about him, that he could not tell you whether he believed or not. In other words, it might be said that he was too proud to take the trouble to think whether or not he had a Creator, and too indolent to do anything but *live*. He was chuck full of the spirit of the world, and a heavy weight. His credit everywhere was not inferior to that of a king. He was extremely rich, and, though a

bachelor, as visitable in his own house as if he were married to a duchess. Everybody could call on him and frequent his parties, though a greater debauchee did not exist, and the most religious of the ladies, who would go to his parties because others went, knew this perfectly well. This was, in some measure, the result of the character of the man ; he was more sensual than amatory, and was consequently always found by real ladies "free from vice." He was not a marrying man, like Henry VIII., who was too much of a Pharisee to be able to take liberties with the commandments without, at the same time, pretending to respect them ; whereas, Lord Slothorpe, a Gentile every inch of him, had been so well contented from his cradle with the doctrine of the devil, that he had never yet felt the slightest inclination to study that of his Creator ; and as to that of his Redeemer, this venerable name alone was enough to keep his thoughts an immeasurable distance from the topic. Yet was he a most tolerant man, and good-natured, and, apparently, benevolent. It was his nature to be so, and no man gave his own nature more liberty than he.

His exterior corresponded in one respect with the character we have described. It was that of a man possessing all the animal attributes of our nature in the highest degree. A perfect stranger would not have been able to tell you, at the first glance, whether he was a rich lord, a gambling-house-keeper, or a tip-top west-end linen-draper : but the instant you knew who he was, his exterior appeared to become more intelligible to you, and he looked, you thought, like what he was, and nothing else. He was rather below the middling height, broad-shouldered, and full in the chest. His long, thick, muscular arms, hollow back, short clean bowed legs, and bony but small and well-shaped feet, were as well suited as they were closely knit to each other. His features were inclined to be regular, and his skin was smooth and unwrinkled : his forehead was arched, his ears small, his hair dark brown, but now partly replaced by a wig : his whiskers flat, smooth, and glossy, descended in a line, about half an inch wide all the way, about three inches down each cheek : his eyes were hazel, his brow was ever serene, and his eyebrows were neat and arched : he had good teeth, and was always beautifully shaved. He usually wore a high, stiff,

light-coloured cravat, and collars, of course, that lay as close to his cheek as a streak of white paint. He always wore a frock-coat in the morning, open, and thus displaying his costly watch-chain amidst the pleats of his snowy cambric shirt, and then again gleaming forth at the lower part of the vest on its way to the pocket at the right. His trousers, usually of a light colour, were always hideously tight, but admirably made, so that when his lordship mounted his horse, no unseemly dragging appeared in the region of the strap that kept them in their place, and a tear was never to be apprehended. They fitted close to the boot, but not in a way to break the curve from the back of the knee to the heel of the boot; thus his legs always looked like blocks, to the great admiration of all intimates having a taste for such things.

His lordship was noted for his horses: it was almost a stud that accompanied him whithersoever he went. He rode well and neatly, but hadn't quite enough of the Yorkshire build to look well on horseback. He didn't appear to be *in* his saddle, but his grasp was powerful, and he was equally at home at quiet and rough riding. His abode at —— was the Palazzo Z——. He frequently gave balls, dinners, and card-parties, which members of the royal family occasionally frequented, and all the English in —— whose footing in the fashionable world qualified them for admittance to these reunions. But, though Lord Slothorpe knew everybody, there were few in the world whom, like Sir Francis Butwell, he chose to regard as bosom friends; this was because, when he had admitted him to his august intimacy, his pride, without his knowing it, was disarmed by regimental influences.

With such a friend in —— Sir Francis felt that he had nothing to fear from the effect on the public mind of the events which had signalized, in so unsatisfactory a manner, his former residence there. Lady Butwell said, they could not have had a friend more adapted to their needs at that moment; and as Sophia looked at the view of the Villa Algorouki, and read the inscription beneath, and heard her parents talking in this way, she also—she knew not why—felt pleased.

"Will he know we are here?" said her ladyship, anxiously.

"Oh, yes!" was the reply. "I put my name down in the subscription-book. He will call to-morrow."

He did so.

"Butwell, how are you?" said he, cordially, as he grasped the hand of his old friend. "I only heard to-day of your arrival; and you may judge I was not a little delighted at the news."

His lordship now greeted Lady Butwell, and then, turning to Sophia, he affected to be paralyzed by the sight of her beauty, and staggered back without speaking, excepting by looks.

Sophia, accustomed to compliments of every kind and description, only looked amused.

"What, may I ask, Miss Butwell, has brought you here? The fame, perhaps, of the Contesse Celeste Fiore's siren charms, which have beguiled of his peace of mind every creature in —, except the cruel fellow who has given her the wound of which she is dying, with her victims. You have come, not as a rival, but as an angel of peace, to heal their wounds with your glances, and with a heavenly largess, to be the all in all to each without offence to one. What a privileged nature your daughter evinces," continued the speaker, for a moment addressing Lady Butwell, "by improving in appearance with every year! There was a time when I only admired—now, I am compelled to love. Ah! happy he (so happy that it would be a happiness to me merely to have his acquaintance) who is the chosen vessel into which her heart escapes, from that generous self wherein it can find no resting-place! Algorouki! Algorouki!" continued he, musingly, whilst he still quietly gazed at Sophia, attributing to exultation her smile at his painful efforts to sustain the declamatory tone in which he had set out; she smiled, too, as he gazed, on observing how his lordship hoped, in the midst of his pretended despair, and strove to recommend *himself*, whilst stooping to the tone of a *go-between*—"may it never be thy misfortune again to fall in love with a statue more beautiful than life, and yet alive, for here the life is but the sting of death. Yes," he went on, but with a sudden alteration of manner, as he began to understand a little better the character of Sophia's smile—he now contracted his brow, and became shrewd and commonsensical,—“Me-

thinks, indeed, Algorouki himself is doomed to bite the dust before this Pallas."

"Who is this Prince Algorouki?" said Sir Francis, drily, and taking up the view of the villa; "when we were here before, the Villa Algorouki belonged to a man named Cowley."

"Yes," replied the other carelessly; "he had purchased it of the executors of the sister of its real owner; the fact of the existence of such a person being unknown to her and almost everybody else in the world at that time."

"He was ruined, poor fellow, in consequence. I want to make out what has become of a son of his who remained here when his father returned to England."

"Oh! Willibald Cowley!"

"Dear me!" exclaimed Sir Francis, joyfully, "I'm glad you know him!"

The other laughed. "I know him, it is true; I should express myself better, perhaps, if I said I *nose* him; for he is known to nobody here except by reputation; so only have patience, and 'you shall nose' him too, before you have been another week in ——."

"It is odd," replied Sir Francis ingenuously, "but equally true, that one of my principal reasons for coming here was to see him, that I might, if possible persuade him to pay his parents a visit."

"I am glad we have met in time," said Lord Slothorpe quietly; "there is a monastery about forty miles from this, near a place called ——, the inmates of which follow the rule of St. Tuck. They would, therefore, most aptly be called, 'Regular villains.' It is there you must go if you would see Mr. Willibald Cowley, whose roguery is said so far to surpass that of his companions, that everybody believes he is favoured with private lessons from the devil. The Tuckites never use open force—they are too spiritual for that—they always beg, embezzle, or swindle. Shoplifting is practised by them with great success. Ha, ha, ha! So you see," continued Lord Slothorpe, eyeing his old friend good-humouredly——

"Ha, ha, ha!" interrupted Sir Francis.

Then his Lordship, edified at the sight of so much facility and of so great readiness to believe himself, condescended to a loving imitative simper.

It is in this way that our "good things" wither and die in the poisonous breath of worldlings. How often are they, who have acquired a much greater amount of virtue than was ever likely to fall to the share of the worthy baronet, beguiled, by a smile, of a resolution it has taken them upwards of an hour the same day to form! As harmless birds are fascinated by the gaze of the serpent, and, though they have wings, whilst he crawls on his belly, easily fall into his power, so are men of good will particularly liable to be influenced by the tongues of those on whose lips is the venom of asps. This, of course, arises from the condition of the will at the moment of the occurrence of the trial. The wills of the wicked are always in a state of activity; but the frequent endeavour to submit his will to that of another, leaves the Christian man frequently in a comparatively helpless state; hence, the love and need of retirement and solitude, which is so often experienced by those who, like St. Peter when he was confounded into the denial of his Lord, are following the latter, but in a state of imperfection;—hence the exclamation of Thomas à Kempis,—“I could wish that I had often been silent, and that I had not been in company.”

“But,” resumed Lord Slothorpe, with his hands resting on the head of his cane, and sweeping quietly and consequentially with his slow-moving, gloating eyes the party before him, “Is it possible you have not yet heard of Prince Algorouki? He is a great man. There is nobody, at least in ———,—I will not even except his majesty,—who is more thought of. And really, I think, with reason. His talents and acquirements are of the highest order. He is in the prime of life; in appearance, about the finest man I ever saw, and,” continued the speaker, but pausing and looking fixedly at Sophia, “he wants a wife.”

“Is the king popular at present?” asked Sir Francis, changing the subject, to relieve his daughter.

“So, so! He would be in a bad way if it were not for Algorouki.”

The remainder of the conversation, which continued for another two hours, consisted of an interchange of communications, which left the Butwells losers in all respects but one; this single gain, however, was a very great one in its way, as will be seen in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A FEW days after this, Lord Slothorpe called again, and presently said to Sir Francis,—“You were asking me the other day who the Prince Algorouki was. You must allow me to introduce you to him; I am sure you would like him. There is to be a *fête champêtre* at the Villa to-morrow. I am going, and you and the ladies may as well accompany me. I am intimately acquainted with Algorouki, and he will feel quite flattered if I make my appearance to-morrow accompanied by English friends, especially *such* friends.”

Had the speaker been an angel, he could not have touched more persuasively the wills of those he addressed. Sophia had the utmost difficulty to conceal the feeling of delight with which she heard the words of this invitation. It was accepted, of course, and *quietly*, of course. Then came questions about the *modus operandi*, when it was presently agreed that they should be in readiness to join Lord Slothorpe in his carriage the next day at 2 o'clock P.M.

The regard with which his consideration and his compliment had inspired Sophia, was the nearest approach to love he could ever awaken in one of the opposite sex. It was, indeed, because he knew, intuitively as well as by experience, he could never have the whole heart (a grace is given to faithful souls, by which such defects in the natural man are completely remedied where marriage is desirable), that Lord Slothorpe shrank from the idea of marriage; but this very circumstance gave rise to a turn for match-making. He liked to contemplate the effects of the passion in others, because he thus tasted, by sympathy, what he could not cause or enjoy.

In the course of the afternoon, certain communications were made in a region remote from the precincts of the drawing-room, which, on the return of the ladies to their locutory, was followed by a very animated conversation between Mrs. Barbara Botherall, her ladyship's maid, and Miss Rosamond Periwinkle, Sophia's. The former was, in her way, a somewhat imposing-looking personage. She had

what is called "large features," *i. e.* a profile something like Henry VIII.'s, with a flat black curl in the middle of her forehead, and a black velvet band encircling her head just above, which kept the said curl firmly fixed in its place. Her eyes were gray, with big black pupils, the whites yellowish: her skin had the hue and the oily look of a Greenlanders', whose sole diet is whale's blubber. In respect to her make, too, she rejoiced in an outline that it would be invidious not to style grandiose. Like Lord Byron, it might truly be said of her that she was a woman of tumultuous passions. But all her wrath and every unsightly belonging of hers was so systematically discharged in right directions, that her mistress, who was not ignorant of her infirmities, could never manage to pick a quarrel with her, and put an end to a connection which was accompanied by so much quietude to others.

Miss Periwinckle was tall, thin, freckled, red-haired, fine, fond of "po'try," but a first-rate milliner, and able to dress anybody but herself.

"What the dickins are we going to have now?" said the latter, who also had a spirit of her own, and played the magpie to Mrs. Botherall's raven.

"This place is just like hell to me," replied the angelic Barbara; and then addressing a footman who was uncording boxes, she continued, "What a stupid fellow you are! Why, I could have uncorded half a dozen boxes whilst you are fumbling over that one. L—d, how the man sweats: wipe your face: I don't want my room to be sprinkled with your perspiration. Now, then, that'll do."

"Perhaps I'd better finish the rest, now I'm about it," said John.

"No; you'll do 'em as I want 'em: you people are always so hankious to save yourselves a little trouble."

John had the sense to make no reply to this reflection. He withdrew, leaving the maids to chatter alone, in voices loud enough to be heard plainly in the street below, into which they frequently stared with a look which caused every — who beheld it to laugh out, so expressive was it of that impotent contempt which so frequently flashes from the eyes of baboons when human beings draw nigh their cages to study awhile "the nature of the beast" within.

"Yes," continued Mrs. Botherall with a self-satisfied grin, showing how fondly she stuck to every idea and utterance of her own; "this place, as I was saying, always puts me in mind of hell. In the first place, it's 'ot enough for anything; then there's that nasty smoking mountain as close to us as can be; but that isn't the reason; but it is the odd names the people have, and the wickedness that you always hear of directly you come here. L—d bless you, when we were here before, there were *such* doings going on here as *you* never heard of before in all *your* born days. Why, there was a chap that come here an' imposed on the whole lot of um in such a way that it was the greatest wonder in the world Miss Sophia warn't vi'lated. I told my good lady what I thought of him the first day he come here, but she didn't like it; but I'm afraid to tell you half the things I heard. Then there are them priests, and nunneries—even the churches, when you go into them and see all the pictures and graven images, and the priests dressed up, and smell the incense—that's the worst of all; I can bear anything but that: when I smell that, I can stand it no longer."

"What does it smell like?"

"Why, I can't tell you; but somehow it always puts me in mind of a foreigner's perspiration, so that you'd think it had something to do with the old gentleman. Then the sky here's so awful blue, and it always seems as if there was going to be a thunderstorm: then them queer-looking trees they call palm-trees; and altogether the smothery feeling you always have here, just as if you were in a room full of people, and wanted to get out into the fresh air and couldn't; for this here place always seems so small to what it do in England, and the sky seems so close to you, and the sun just the same—these and a lot of other things it is that makes it seem like hell to me."

"It's funny they couldn't let us have a little time to rest and look about us," replied Rosamond, who was none the less desirous of going out into the streets because her companion had compared it to the infernal regions; "besides, John says that if we hadn't been their servants, we might have gone to this picnic."

"Bless you," replied Barbara, biting her thread energetically, "I wouldn't have gone to please the king. I've been

once, and, if I can help it, I'll never go again. Talking of this here—why this is nothing to that: when you're there, it seems just as if it was all over with you. Did you ever go down a coal-pit?"

"No."

"Well, it's something like that, only ever so much worse. There you see where the light comes from; you see the candles and the tallow: but when you're there, poking up among those mountains, and your head almost touching the sky, with a blaze about you just like a tip-top gin-palace, you forget it's the sun, and you think the light comes from flames, and that you're in them without knowing it. There is flames that don't burn directly. Spirit flames at first seem like nothing, but they will burn enough if you only give um time; and so would these, no doubt. But the willa's the worse part of it. Deary me, what a turn it did give me the first time I see it! There was a lot of posts, I remember, stuck here and there before it, with men's heads on the top of them: then, p'raps, if you turned your eyes away a minute from them, you'd see, down at the bottom of a shady path, such as in England generally leads to the privy, a bit of a corpse stuck up, the head off, with no arms, and the legs cut off about half-way up the thigh. In another place there'd be grinning at you a naked fellow, with half of him a horse. When I see these things, you may be sure I should have cut off much quicker than I came if I hadn't had confidence in master's power. 'Thinks I, if he goes there so often, there's nothing to fear; but sleep in the willa itself, I couldn't—no, not to please him or missis, and I don't think if anybody'd offered to make me queen for it, I could."

Barbara's manner, whilst speaking, was that of a person who would place immediately under the same category of her estimation with the things condemned any person who should exhibit a disposition to indulge the hope that they would not appear to all so odious as they did to her; consequently, Miss Rosamond Perrywinckle found herself for some time deprived of the power of speaking as she wished to speak in reply: for, as a disciple of Byron, she could not, all at once, become indoctrinated with the more elevated views of her to whom his heaven appeared but a hell. A silence of some minutes ensued; at last the younger maid, who, though not

so *bold*, was quite as *game*, had sufficiently overcome her innate "respect for persons" to be able to say,—

"Well, it's queer!"

"It *is* queer, sure enough," replied the other briskly, and eyeing her companion suspiciously. She had a loud, strong, sounding voice, and her laugh was more expressive of contempt than mirth. She treated Rosamond to a peal of this on the present occasion, who looked at that moment almost as feeble and foolish as we may imagine her "fair" namesake did, whilst Queen Eleanor scolded her before she tendered the cup of poison.

"Well, it's queer that people like master and mistress, who can go where they like, should come here, if it is so like hell."

"Come, now," said Barbara, her eyes moving with a marvellous celerity as they spun over the freckled face of her fair opponent, "let's have none of your sauce! Don't you contradict *me*, because I won't stand it."

"What, mayn't I think as I like?"

"It's no use to talk to me, because I won't stand it," replied the other, grinning resolutely.

"Why, what a passion you're in," continued the other, coolly; "it's enough to make one sick to see an old woman like you going on in this way."

"Old or young, that's no matter; and so you'd better hold your tongue."

"I'm sure I shan't, then—not for you, nor ten like you."

"A pretty woman you are," continued Barbara, *shining* with rage.

What might have ensued, had the contest continued longer, we know not; but, fortunately, Lady Butwell entered the room at this moment. Barbara had gradually acquired such a facility in the art of changing from one key to another, that generally her courtesy was greatest when it had been preceded the instant before by a paroxysing rage. As if by magic, all traces of anger and excitement disappeared from her countenance as the door opened; at the same time both the maids instantly rose from their seats.

"Excellent acting, indeed," said their mistress, seating herself. "We were just this minute passing under this window, and heard Barbara's voice as plainly as if she had

been in the street. It is well for you that you could not be understood, and that the Italians are accustomed to raise their voices, in the most friendly conversation, very much in the same way that people do in England only when they are in a passion, otherwise, of course, you would have been pointed at whenever you walked out as a specimen of the subduing power of the Protestant religion."

Barbara, who was a thorough-paced Evangelical, here took out her *mouchoir*, and, at the same time, shed into it a copious flood of tears—not tears of compunction, be it remembered, but tears of "*convenance*," which, as usual, had the effect of silencing her mistress, and putting an end to the "bother."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

DREAMS and omens, viewed as operators on the human will, are properly treated in the Catechism under the one head of fooleries, because they are both liable to be employed by a Power which will not condescend to address itself to the understanding. Dreams, like those of Pharaoh, which we cannot interpret ourselves, and yet are impelled by — to consult a minister of God as to their signification, bear about them safe signs of a heavenly origin, and form no ground for thinking differently upon this subject from the way prescribed by the Church, which only cautions us to disregard self-interpreting dreams, the commonest and the most agreeable to the credulous and the vain.

Sophia Butwell's dream, related in a previous chapter, gave no such indication of a heavenly origin; nevertheless, she accepted it as a providential indication of the steps most proper for her to take at this critical period of her life: so that, having first been allowed to generate within her the desire to revisit —, it next began to invest with an appearance of unadvisedness a decision which, a short while previously, the offer of the world could not have induced her to alter. Raised in her own estimation to the condition of an immediate disciple of heaven, she could not, of course, hesi-

tate a moment to listen to the voice from above. Hence she had abandoned in thought the determination never again to accept an offer of marriage, before the allusions of Lord Slothorpe, coinciding, according to her judgment, exactly with the course of the anticipations which had taken their rise from this dream, satisfied her that the moment was fast approaching when her promised triumph would be consummated with an opening to a most advantageous matrimonial alliance. The whole of the afternoon and night following Lord Slothorpe's visit was occupied by her in cogitations which all went to determine on the Prince Algorouki as the exalted one destined to realize her proudest hopes of a triumph in marriage surpassing everything that was once promised her when she was last at —. Sleepless she lay the whole of that night; but she spent it pleasantly; for every misgiving disappeared as fast as it came, the instant she reverted to the dream. "How strange, too!" she said once, "that from the first moment I beheld the Villa Algorouki, my fancy has been glued to the spot, so that I could never heartily admire any other!"

The presence of Lord Slothorpe in — had made Sir Francis and Lady Butwell feel as assured as if they were walking through their own post-town in England; so that the prospect of their approaching *début* was pleasing enough to both. They, too, slept little this night. Both *thought* Sophia was destined to find such favour in the eyes of the prince as should eventually determine his choice of a wife; but they had the good taste to refrain from speaking on the subject even to one another.

It was long since the three had risen in such high spirits as they enjoyed the morning of the following day. The bay of — looked as beautiful as ever, and the sky seemed now to merit the name it had in England; and, as if she had been informed over-night that jollity was to be the order of the day, the first thing Mrs. Barbara Botherall said on entering her mistress's room was, "Ma'am, all the waiters and servants in the hotel are full of Miss Sophia and this here prince being sure to take to one another the instant they meet. It's no use my telling um that Miss Sophia's had enough of foreigners already, and that it aint likely that, after refusing six English lords, she would throw herself away

on a sallow Italian. They get quite savage when I talk in this way, and snort so contemptuously, that if they were crying up the old gentleman himself, they could not show themselves fitter for the job."

"He is evidently very popular," replied her mistress, "so that we must excuse a little enthusiasm, and take it as a compliment their speaking of my daughter in the manner you describe."

CHAPTER XL.

THE next day, punctually at two o'clock, Lord Slothorpe, in a lightly-built barouche, drawn by four grays, hunters in appearance and by blood, with postilions, whose weight and riding indicated a fitness for a much more sportsman-like position than the present, drove to the door of the hotel where the Butwells were stopping. It was with a feeling of indignant surprise that, on reaching the steps of the hotel, Sophia noticed the concourse of people that was collected to witness their departure. All stared at her particularly; and many of the more active ran after the carriage, as if to warn the passer-by to join with them in the stare, as it spun along the streets. Every balcony, too, was full of spectators; but the curiosity they exhibited was easily excused, as it was attributed to their being the relations or friends of those who were gone or going to the *fête*. That they neither passed nor were passed by any other carriage on the road, arose, as she presently learnt from Lord Slothorpe, from their being rather behind time.

It was now that the Butwells heard from beginning to end the history of the prince—how, for years, he had lived in ignorance of his descent, and did not return from foreign climes, till the triumphant evidence which identified him as the grandson and heir of the founder of the Algorouki estate, like the beams of the rising sun, had won him a welcome from the whole country before he returned to take possession of his property. The Cowleys were made to appear culpably careless; in other words, silly, fond people for purchasing in

such a hurry. "They paid dearly for coveting their neighbour's house," was one of the severe things said of them, which had the effect of making the Butwells half ashamed of the intimacy which had formerly endeared that family to them. Thus, before they had reached the entrance to the premises belonging to the villa, the prince alone was thought of by the Butwells, at a time and place which otherwise would have flooded their minds with affecting reminiscences connected with their once valued, and now not wholly forgotten, friends.

But though carried away and stunned by the firing of the great gun Lord Slothorpe, and the glitter of the bright array which met the sight as they were driven up to the chief entrance of the villa, Sophia did not feel satisfied at all. Thought having of late become the chief source of happiness with her, a scene like this was valued only for what it promised as a subject of rumination afterwards. The years that had elapsed since she was last here were now suddenly cast from her memory, and she stood raw and impressible as a girl of eighteen before the consequential lord whom she half suspected to be about to show her her future lord and master, in the person of the illustrious Prince Algorouki. But for this very reason her pride was mortified. Where was all that philosophic indifference, the display of which in England caused so many to bow before her as a superior being? She was now quite out of her depth, and had nothing left to indicate her own independence but her teeth and nails.

Her excitement was not a little aggravated at this moment, when the exclamation, "There they are," so directed as to leave no room for doubting that the numerous spectators, from amongst whom it repeatedly came, were fixedly gazing on herself and her parents, reached her ear. There was, indeed, quite a crowd of ladies and gentlemen in the porch and on the steps, and all, as it seemed to Sophia, as well as Sir Francis and Lady Butwell, to witness their approach. Lord Slothorpe, however, took no notice of it, but simply greeted those among it with whom he was personally acquainted. They now alighted from the carriage and followed the servants, who stood ready to conduct them into the presence of their host. The instant they appeared at the door of the spacious drawing-room, now crowded with people,

in which they understood they were to meet the prince, those who saw them first fell back, and left an avenue of eager spectators, through which they were conducted by Lord Slothorpe, who had Lady Butwell's arm, whilst Sir Francis, with his daughter, followed. Immediately before them, and occupying a central spot at the furthest extremity of the room, appeared a knot of ladies and gentlemen, which, as they drew closer, opened.

So ceremonious an introduction had not been without its effects, even on the nerves of Sir Francis Butwell, who was, consequently, relieved, when at length the completion of the business seemed at hand. "Now then," he was saying to himself, as the circle opened, "for the Prince Algorouki!" But in the next moment, he gave utterance to an exclamation hideously indicative, especially by its tone, of a readiness to quarrel with all present, not even excepting the king. "Why, good heavens!" said he, "that is Carmen Festa." An uproarious peal of laughter from the whole assembled company, in which Lord Slothorpe joined, with a vehemence that amazed Sir Francis, showed him at once that it behoved him to wait a moment before he went on to explain to all present that this was the impostor he had, when he was last at —, made such efforts to get arrested. When the laughter had a little subsided, the king, recognized at once, though Sir Francis had seen little of him, taking the Prince Algorouki by the hand, approached the Englishman, whilst Lord Slothorpe prompted,—"The king—go on one knee." "It is true," said his majesty, in broken English, but in a most affable tone, "*Carmen Festa* was an impostor, but as the *Prince Algorouki* he is my great friend, and most loyal subject. I have come here, Sir Francis Butwell, expressly to be the means of reconciling you two, and I feel confident you will not deprive me of the pleasure it will give me to be successful."

Sir Francis was too much of a gentleman not to be most painfully sensible of the amount of honour due to the person of a king. His heart was wont instantaneously to overflow with devotion at the sight of his own sovereign, and similar feelings were inspired by the presence of the King of —. The prince, with an expression of respect and affection, now tendered his hand, and said: "Yes, his majesty has forgiven

the past, and all the world has forgiven me but you, Sir Francis ; but I shall not believe myself worthy of their forgiveness till yours be added to it."

"God forbid," replied Sir Francis with animation, "that I should presume to hold for one moment the position of a stumbling-block to a man's reconciliation with his country. I rather hasten to unite my voice with the absolving sentence it has passed, that I may participate in the merit of so generous an action." Lady Butwell showed, by an expressive smile, that she appropriated the sentiments just expressed by her husband.

All this while, Sophia's pale blue eye, with an expression of wonder mingled with something like awe, rested studiously on the features of her quondam admirer. Her soul sat in her eyes ; for when she saw how her anticipations regarding the Prince Algorouki were to be verified, she was literally lost in astonishment. For a few moments, her soul stood still, hovering hesitatingly over a quarry so formidable in appearance. "Yet," she contended within herself, "it is to this that Providence had conducted me." The eyes of Algorouki, stealing from the father's to the daughter's face, seemed to see this thought as they sat down before her. His searching glances were boldly met by hers, and for a few moments their eyes fought. Could a spectator have read her heart at that moment, he would have felt for her. She knew not what to do, for her usual penetration failed to discover to her the course she ought to pursue. Algorouki at this moment took her hand. As he did so, a voice seemed to whisper in her ear—(or was it simply her own thought?)—*the Comte di Valdonsella was only an impostor because he did not appear as the Prince Algorouki.* A smile of forgiveness, which discovered, against her will, how entire at this moment was the confidence restored by this unexpected resolution of her difficulty—a smile which literally spoke volumes, because the whole soul spoke through it—now emboldened the prince to raise the hand he clasped. What he had intended to do next no one knows, inasmuch as the execution of the intention was prevented by the deafening burst of a military brass band. The players, fifty in number, were stationed near the spot occupied by the royal party. They had commenced in this unexpected manner at the bidding of a gallant of the blood

royal, who had been impatiently watching the development of the scene just described, inasmuch as, caring for nobody in the room excepting himself, he was in a hurry to get Sophia, an old acquaintance of his, to waltz with him. The burst aforesaid turned out to be the commencement of a waltz,—one of those noisy, gusty, yet nervous compositions which experience shows to be the best adapted to hasten on that mysterious state of the rational soul, the elevated nature of which can only be explained to us by the dumb oratory of “the light fantastic toe.”

At first, for a few minutes, all stood bewildered. The king was silenced ; the prince withdrew his eyes from Miss Butwell’s features ; Sir Francis, like a man in a shower-bath, seemed wondering whether he should ever be himself again. His wife shook and smiled idiotically ; whilst Sophia, solicited by the marplot, whose expressive features were beaming with the impudence which showed himself to be the thunderer, was glad to escape from the painful position she had just occupied in a tour.

Whilst they waltz, let us walk over to that part of the room where, at last, they stopped to rest a little.

Everybody in the room of course knew, by this time, who the Butwells were ; and those ladies as well as gentlemen who had *heard* only of Sophia, came now, full of curiosity, to inspect her features. We have already stated that the lower part of her brow and the eyes presented that busy, thoughtful expression which so much distinguishes the same features in the busts of Napoleon I., but with a complexion so brilliantly fair, as to startle, whilst a mouth and chin perfectly feminine, though full of character, softened the effect of the whole into a look that inspired a feeling of vehement admiration, with a violent longing for a favourable glance, in most persons who approached her off their guard, whether men or women. Her manners, too, entirely free from the smallest tinge of affectation, and yet marvellously correct, impressed the beholder in a way that subdued his admiration into a feeling of respect. The strangers, therefore, who now crowded round Sophia, did nothing but applaud the taste of the prince, whilst the old acquaintances, who, since the disappearance of the Butwells after the failure of their attempt to capture Carmen, had learnt to laugh with the Italians at the quixotism of Sir

Francis, and, subsequently, on the reappearance of Carmen in his real character of Prince Algorouki, to abuse his daughter as well as himself, when they again looked on that beautiful face, instinct with sense, could not but forgive the past and rejoice at her return, and the reconciliation that seemed now to be on foot.

In the course of the evening, the Prince Algorouki invited the Butwells into an adjoining room, and, having shut the door, bade them be seated, and then said, with a frankness of manner which illuminated his words with the appearance of perfect sincerity, "I understand your feelings perfectly. You feel as if you had been dazzled into a reconciliation, and not without reason, since I must plead guilty to having had recourse to stratagem to bring one about. I heard of your arrival immediately after the event. Lord Slothorpe was mentioning you as valued friends just arrived, forgetting, if he had ever heard of it, our intimacy in times past. When I told him what had then occurred, we soon determined that a meeting in the presence of the king would be the best mode of removing quickly from your mind the impression which I conceived still stood in the way of a revival of our intimacy: hence this assemblage. But this is only a beginning; and I will not say more at present than I have any right to suppose you will listen to, till you have had time to reflect and make inquiries."

Sir Francis replied, "More than his king's and his country's approbation I think we have no right to demand as a guarantee of a man's worth. Let, therefore, the past be forgotten. I would rather it should be so, prince."

"Well," Algorouki was replying, with a bright smile, when they were interrupted by the entrance of a servant, who said that the royal party were just going. This put an end to the conference.

People now began to inspect the repairs, which had recently imparted to the decorative part of the villa a costly look, which they did not possess before. They wandered in units and in tens, upstairs and downstairs, and in every direction. There were, also, some pictures to criticise. Next came the singing by a *prima donna*, then dancing again, and wandering about the premises; then thoughts of returning, with actual preparations, followed, some time afterwards, by getting

into carriages and waving of hands, &c. &c., and so the *fête* faded away.

Sophia, of course, as the carriage slowly rolled along the winding road that led to —, — it was dark, but the stars were out, and the air mild, and the sort for thinking in, — spoke only when civility required it. She was now in a new world, and as full of inexperience there as a newly-born infant; but this made thinking so nice and so necessary. What rich imaginings and strange anticipations were hers that evening! What was she going to be? — a princess *indeed*! People may sneer, thought she, as I myself often have, at foreign titles; but a title is a title, and only needs to be properly supported to elicit the homage which is its due. She thought then of the glorious triumph she should have when, as the Princess Algorouki, she should laugh over, with her friends in England, the trick that the prince had played her when he approached her as the Conde di Valdonsella. But it would occupy a volume, were we to attempt to record half of what Sophia thought and imagined. It should be stated, however, that the residue of all these meditations was a feeling of restlessness, to which she had long been a stranger. "This isn't true happiness," said she fastidiously, as she lay down for the night.

It was not what the prince had said, so much as the representations of Lord Slothorpe, as they drove home, that left no doubt on the minds of the Butwells that the former intended to renew his addresses.

"Knowing his fancy for marriage," said his lordship, "I have been pitying Algorouki for some time past, because he has done nothing but lament the difficulty of finding another like yourself. Of course, I have often heard him exclaim, such a one is to be found somewhere, and I shall be upon the *qui vive*, you may depend upon *that*. But you see," continued his lordship courteously to Sophia, "another Miss Butwell was not to be found, and his constancy is rewarded in a way that his modesty had forbidden him to dream of. For I cannot suppose that *your* fidelity is inferior to his. You will forgive the past, and show the world that woman's is more generous than the boasted love of the father, who had but prodigality to forgive in his penitent son."

Language of this kind from Lord Slothorpe proved, in its

effects on Sir Francis, more stupifying than ever. It awakened in Lady Butwell also feelings of regard that she had not before experienced ; whilst, as before shown, it broke down all remaining barriers in Sophia's interior, though she did not choose outwardly to proclaim herself agreeable to the renewal of the engagement.

CHAPTER XLI.

DURING the sleepless night which Sophia passed on her return after her first interview with the Prince Algorouki, she had occasionally, but reluctantly, recalled the stranger's warning, with the look of entire intelligence which had determined her, in times past, to have done with him for ever. How much readier to believe the evidence of our senses, with the iconoclasts, than that of our conscience, with those who preferred to adhere, according to the direction of the Apostles' Creed, to the testimony of the Catholic Church ! The woman, thought Sophia, was speaking the truth, no doubt, as far as her *own impressions were concerned*. She obviously did not know that the pretended count was, in fact, though as ignorant of it at the time as herself, a prince. I can see plainly that the imposition then practised was rather the result of circumstances than of a deceitful, malicious disposition. Sophia's retrospective reflections went no further than this. She wished to forget the past. The recollection of her own violence, however, assisted much the cause of Algorouki in her heart ; from this her returning regard derived an admixture of tenderness which it would not else have included. In the course of the next day she received a letter from the prince. It was written in Italian, of which language Sophia had now the entire mastery. We present a copy of it in English.

“DEAREST LADY,—Before I again approach you in person, let me satisfy myself that in doing so I shall not give offence, where I so ardently long to be welcome. With respect to the past, let me at once plead guilty to conduct richly meriting

the severest animadversions it elicited from your parents and yourself. It is true that I did for a time, when I was astray in the world, not having yet beheld the light that has since shown me, in yourself, who is my guardian angel, choose to live an outlaw—to become the leader of a rebel horde; and although my bloodiest deed amounted to little more than a visitation similar to that by which Sir Francis was plundered of a part of his wearing apparel, yet is the mere fact of my having leagued myself with outlaws sufficient in my eyes to criminate me equally with the most abandoned amongst them. The imposition which first enabled me to make your acquaintance I condemn less readily, because, in my regard, it has proved ‘a happy fault,’ and *that* I am tempted to ask *your* forgiveness of. At the time I literally knew not what to do, for my fortunes then were in such a desperate plight, that I could not, it seemed to me then, present myself before you in any other character, without throwing away the chance of ultimately obtaining your hand. Your anger on first hearing that I had deceived you,—from one, by the bye, who knew too little of my circumstances and of my general sentiments to be qualified to form a correct notion of the difficulties of my position—your anger, when I felt its pressure in the form of the hot pursuit that drove me out of the country, only increased my love, and I fled with the determination of never forgetting you; and I never *have* forgotten you. Indeed, I never could, though, latterly, in despair, I strove to do so; and it is this continuing love on my side that inspires me now with a hope that you will receive me again.

“Believe me ever, dearest Lady,” &c. &c.

Sophia read this letter several times. With the implicit confidence she reposed in her own penetration, when she found herself unable to detect in an appeal of this description anything demanding a cautious answer, it was a sign to her that a reply of this kind would be out of place; she even went so far as to hold that it would be contemptible and base. Where *only feeling* prompted, she was wont to be somewhat reserved for appearance’s sake; but when the appeal was made to her understanding, she was too apt, in her eagerness to display quickness and decision, to be precipitate. Before,

however, answering this letter, she took it to her parents, who, having read it, both took the same view of it that she did. All were struck at, what seemed to them, the extraordinary candour of the writer. They scarcely looked at the *matter* of the confession, the *spirit* of it pleased them so much.

"I don't see," said Lady Butwell, "how you could pretend, after such a letter, to judge him unworthy of being restored to your favour. He has done all that a man *can* do when he has erred,—he has confessed his fault, and humbly asked pardon."

"Let us never forget," chimed in Sir Francis, sententiously, "that one of our wisest and greatest kings, before he came to the throne, was apparently so unfit for a position of inferior dignity, that he passed his time like a vagabond. Algorouki," continued Sir Francis, knitting his brows, and looking extremely shrewd, "is evidently unfitted by nature for moving quietly in an humble walk of life. Princely instincts were ever constantly peeping out; and now we see what it all meant—that he was a star of the first magnitude, shorn of his beams."

As she withdrew, Sophia felt uncomfortably dutiful, because there happened to be so much similarity between her own and her parents' sentiments on the subject. "How painful it is to be good!" said she, sitting down to write an answer. Her epistle opened without the usual apostrophe.

"As things have turned out, the anger you speak of in your letter should not now be regarded by either of us with an unfavourable eye, because it has guarded the way to my affections ever since in such a way, that my impression was, up to the present moment, that disuse had deprived them of life. But now, with your letter before me, I should convict my language to you formerly of insincerity, if I hesitated to say that, after their long slumber, I remain, with respect to you, wholly unaltered. My father and mother are also desirous that all should be forgotten that has occurred since the breaking off of our engagement; and I am to add that they will be glad to see you here whenever you like to call.

"Believe me ever yours sincerely,

"SOPHIA BUTWELL."

We have said or shown before that the strength of Sir Francis, as a moral agent, lay chiefly in the extent, arising from the mode in which he had been brought up (he had begun at Eton, had graduated at Oxford, and was finished in the House of Commons), of his participation in the national spirit of his native country; he was therefore not half the man in a passive that he was in an aggressive state, it being the property of this spirit to dwell in the breasts of those only who are actively engaged, by words or actions, in its service. He accordingly shrunk from the further investigation into the truth of Carmen's representations, on his return to —, which his own habitual good sense informed him he ought to make, and kept his ears open only to statements favouring the impression he had recently received, and which went to reduce him and his family to the plight of debtors to a calumniated but forgiving friend. Their original motive for coming to —, and Willibald's letters, were now forgotten by all, their firm conviction being that they had come only to consummate a marriage "which had been made in heaven."

CHAPTER XLII.

IN all towns that are not quite so large as London or Paris there are minds active enough to take cognisance of nearly everything involving a contest between good and evil principles, that is happening around. A vast number of persons desiderate this sort of knowledge, and, in the pursuit of it, incur, perhaps, again the guilt of wishing to be as gods; but we shall perhaps be justified in imagining that there are some on whom it may be said to be forced; at least, the circumstances of some are such, at certain periods of their lives, that much of it comes to them without their conscious seeking. They stand then in the whispering-gallery of the world, without knowing how they got there; but being there, without any fault of theirs, they begin interpreting, and turn sibyls there without any scruple,—if, that is to say, their understanding be sufficiently active, and their sense of justice

sufficiently strong, to incline them to the utterance of oracles. We are going to introduce our readers now to a household of a kind that is too seldom in these days placed in a proper light before the public eye. Our old friend Father Volpicelli had, since we last had occasion to lift the curtain that concealed his happy but monotonous life, been attached to a parish church in ———, where he soon commanded the respect of all who knew him by the zeal and courage he exhibited in quality of pastor. Not long after his arrival there, among those who came frequently to confession, he had to direct a young woman, whose intelligence as a penitent pleased him so much that he was determined to employ her in certain cases where female aid had become indispensable to the entire fulfilment of the elaborate duties attaching to his office. The tact she exhibited on these occasions only served to increase the joy he experienced on the discovery among his flock of so gifted and trustworthy a person. He was going on with her in this way when she one day spoke to him as follows:—

“Father, you would hesitate, I think, to employ me as you do if you knew how indispensable it is to my bodily safety that I should seldom meet the public gaze. I have a powerful enemy, from whom I have now been hiding for some years, and I am obliged, in consequence, every now and then, to remove from one place to another.”

“Ah!” interrupted the padre, “I see, I see—but you have that about you which makes me think it cannot be the will of God that you should hide any more. Without mentioning anything calculated to make known his person, you will perhaps have no objection to let me know whether he is a man of principle?”

“Following my own experience, I should say, quite the reverse. But it is not as a seducer that I fear him. Unless he be now an altered man, there is nothing on earth he would rather have brought to him at this moment than my head.”

“Is he powerful?”

“I can’t tell you, reverend father, where his power ends. Death, certainly, would not destroy his influence, and that would perpetuate the danger to which all are exposed whom he hates.”

“Enough!” replied the padre: “in future I shall give

you no more commissions, and I will do all in my power to promote the concealment which seems so indispensable to your safety."

The padre never heard the weekly confessions of the young woman just introduced to the reader, that he did not say to himself, or rather think, in the secret recesses of his sagacious heart—these are the accents of a saint—the Spirit of God has gone right through this heart and this mind, and has made them clean and instinct with the holy love of Himself. The sense she exhibited of his own mysterious authority, which he himself exercised with fear and trembling, so sensible was he of the vast responsibility attaching to it, was certainly not one of the most insignificant of the signs which told him that she had almost become as a little child in the sight of Him whose minister he was. Whatever, therefore, she desired to say to him on other topics, he listened to with alacrity. One day, just after her confession and absolution, she said,—

"If I am confident of being able to prevent an innocent person from marrying a man who is grossly imposing upon her, and will certainly, for that reason, by marrying her, destroy all her happiness for life—ought I not to exercise my power?"

"We are so apt to deceive ourselves in positions that usually give rise to questions of this sort! How many times have I had this question put to me, and yet scarcely in one instance could I recommend the course that appeared to my client the only proper one to be pursued. In the case proposed for my consideration, I am not satisfied that you will not simply play the part of what the world calls a busy-body, and needlessly involve yourself in very serious difficulties. The female you wish to befriend may not wish to be undeceived, and in that case she will not believe you, and then the odium of a calumniator will be attached to you. Two things, therefore, must be cleared up before I can advise the course proposed—the first is, that the female is sincere and of an upright mind; the second is, that you possess the credit requisite for the accomplishment of your charitable object: for it would be presumption in you to interfere in the way proposed, unless there were good reason to hope that God has given you the grace of a good name."

The last words stole away, as if by magic, all the young woman's zeal in a minute.

"Alas!" she said, "you know, reverend father, that so far from having the degree of credit you contemplate, I scarcely dare allow the world to know that I exist! But she whom I would serve would listen to me—nay, I am convinced I could make her believe, though the whole world rose at the same moment to denounce me as a liar. Then, as to her integrity, I can hardly imagine the trial that it would not be more than equal to"——

"We must consider the matter a little longer," replied the cautious padre. "We shall not deserve to be guided aright in it without first praying for the light required."

The penitent took her departure, and three weeks had elapsed before she recurred to it again. She then said—

"I have prayed, father. I have offered two communions for it, and my mind still remains unchanged; but I shall abide by your decision. But let me first inform you that the marriage is to take place next week."

"Well, I too have prayed, and I am disposed to give you the permission you demand of me. I only require as a condition that you act prudently, and communicate your information with the understanding that the source of it shall not be revealed. I say this before God as the very best advice I am able to offer. You will, therefore, pay attention to every part of it."

The woman promised to the best of her ability to do what was required of her, and, having begged her confessor to pray that God would bless her undertaking, she withdrew.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Nor to weary the reader, we pass over the month during which the world must be kept in ignorance of the exact position the Prince Algorouki and Sophia held in relation to each other. The day and the hour fixed for the celebration of their nuptials is now known throughout —, and hundreds have received invitations to assist at the marriage feast. They occupy the Palazzo —, taken expressly to enable them to entertain with sufficient magnificence, for Sir Francis is determined his Sophia's wedding shall be so gay a one as to earn the title of *ever memorable* amongst the inhabitants of the city destined to be the scene thereof. Having seen much, he is up to his work, and is in a fair way to accomplish his object. Lady Butwell works with him in looking to the details, which she is elaborating as if they were designed to remain for the admiration of future generations. Miss Rosamond Perrywinckle rises with the occasion, and, like Sir Isaac Newton, is so absorbed by her work, that meat and drink are forgotten, and nothing but a headache or a sudden loss of all nervous energy can induce her to seek the renewal of her forces in an occasional hasty slumber.

And what does Sophia in the midst of all these preparations? She speaks little and does less. Now and then she goes to the piano. But how does she *feel*? According to her own account afterwards, rather like a ninny. I shall know by-and-by how I like it, thought she; at present I'm rather in the dark. Though had you, reader, invested with the requisite authority, appeared to her at that time, saying, *Ten worlds if you will remain as you are*, she would have replied, *Ten thousand could not induce me*. She already preferred the merely honorary title of the Princess Algorouki to any in the world, and nothing at present occurred to her as decidedly a drawback to the happiness promised by her approaching marriage. The prince, though in every respect a tremendous fellow, displayed in his intercourse with her a playful docility which had vastly increased within her the sense of her own power, and she never doubted for a moment

that she should be the prime mover of the light-evolving system which was to originate in their union.

Some pleasures, by exceeding our powers of enjoyment, become burdensome ; but they still retain the character of pleasures, in that we are loth to part with them though they oppress us. These belong to the most injurious species of pleasure we can be immersed in, because the most delusive ; for where the enjoyment is great, there is room for a fear and a trembling ; but people are apt to make a merit of self-indulgence where it is purchased at the expense of their bodily ease or mental tranquillity. Things, they think, cannot be worse than they are, and so they live unprepared for the day of direct contradiction. Sophia's preparations for her marriage were accompanied by feelings which stood between her and the remote future like a dense vapour. Generally she was morbidly given to the practice of anticipation, and seemed to wander into the coming hours as fast as the present slid from her experience. But now she was comfortably sitting down in the dark pit from whence the past and the future rise tempting one to explore their airy heights like the two loftiest mountains that rise within sight of our place of residence. Now indeed was her spirit becoming somewhat sordid, but she took no notice of these things.

It was with a great effort she wrote at this time the following letter to Emily Wortley, the first she could bring herself to pen after the extraordinary change her *present* had undergone within the last six weeks :—

“ You must thank Heaven *for* me, my dear Emily,—I am myself so miserably deficient in the sense of gratitude,—for the most merciful dispensation by which, directed by the divine light of a dream, I have come here to learn—now, what do you think ?—shut up the letter and guess—no, it would be a fruitless effort—that the *impostor* was only an impostor because he presented himself before me in the first instance as the Conde de Valdonsella instead of the Prince Algorouki. I know what you will say on reading this—‘ Poor child ! a new disguise easily hides the faults of an old lover ! ’—hence I will briefly state the grounds that exist for the certitude which has possession of everybody here, that the Prince Algorouki is the real and true title and name of the individual,

not himself then sensible of the fact, I formerly knew as the Conde de Valdonsella, *alias* Carmen Festa. Let me begin by telling you that it is true the man was actually 'playing at robbers' during the whole of the time we were visited by him when we were last at —, and that it is just possible he would have been a real robber now had not Providence so directed matters for his advantage, shortly after my father had offered a reward for his arrest, that, in the person of one of the inmates of a Franciscan monastery, whither he had fled incog. to conceal himself, he should find the only creature living in the whole world who knew who his parents were. He was brought up at a foundling hospital, having been born in a prison, when and in which his mother died, shortly after the sudden death of his father, who had been detained to take his trial, as a perfect stranger to all around him, for a rape. The chaplain of the prison, afterwards the friar, whom the fugitive 'impostor' had to thank for the disclosure of his own origin, was intrusted, when she made her confession, with the knowledge of her name, but (evidently from a concern for her husband's reputation) under promise that he would not divulge it. No other being could say that the prison-born infant, who was brought up as a foundling, was wasting the precious time of a prince's boyhood in the degrading society of a crowd of pauper bastards, yet this foolish chaplain scrupled to publish the fact, pretending that his silence would be rewarded by dispensations more advantageous, even in a temporal point of view, to the young prince than this disclosure. In this impression it appears he was terribly mistaken. The young prince, as if conscious from his cradle of the wrong which was being done him, evinced a spirit becoming his high birth, and by displaying his rights in his extraordinary talents and energy, having literally wrung from the civil authorities, to whom the foundling hospital belonged, an education suiting his station, he distinguished himself at the university of Bologna in a way which made him the dread of the bigots and petty instruments of tyranny who were at the head of that establishment; hence his temporary revolt from the standard of order. I do not allow my imagination to busy itself with the particulars of a period of his life over which he invites his fellow-men to cast a veil. It would be obviously base to do so. It will suffice to say that his conduct

now shows that he was perfectly sincere in the professions which he made to me when he was really in all other respects enacting the part of an impostor.

"But to go on with the beginning of this letter—Carmen Festa did not stop long to scold the friar for keeping him so many years in ignorance of his rights and titles, but having most carefully concealed himself till we had left Italy, he next made known confidentially the nature of his claim to an advocate of great credit and professional skill at ——. By his instrumentality the government was soon satisfied of the truth of these following showings and decreed accordingly:—That the impostor's father, without knowing it at the time, was the true owner of the Algorouki estate, his father having died intestate during his absence; that the sister of the latter, though for some years the reputed owner, was never legally so, and consequently that her executors had illegally sold the estate to Captain Cowley. If your brother reads this letter, he will of course here exclaim, 'But does not the whole claim, after all, rest on the testimony of an interested witness?' I must add, therefore, that on pushing the inquiry in the direction it had taken from his testimony, the identity of the prisoner at Bologna with the banished son of the founder of the Algorouki estate was established with a clearness which placed the new claim in a blaze of light. Now then, my dear Emily, stand astonished with me at the grandeur of this dispensation, by which, through the sufferings it has entailed, our present happiness has been so much enhanced. How *feelingly* now I can exclaim—

" 'God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to disclose.'

"We are just now in a very great bustle indeed, preparing for my marriage, which, after a delay of six years, it is determined shall be delayed no longer. God bless you, and pray for me.

"I remain, &c."

It was shortly after she had finished this very letter that the footman entering the drawing-room, where she was sitting with her mother, said there was a young woman below who wished to speak to her privately. The footman was desired

to send Miss Rosamond Perrywinckle to her first, to ascertain who she was and what she wanted. Rosamond returned after a rather lengthened interview to say she could not induce the young woman to give any account of herself or to communicate even a hint as to the purport of her visit ; but that she appeared very respectable, and said that Miss Butwell was already slightly acquainted with her.

Sophia became oppressed by a sickening sensation and an indescribable dismay as the conviction forced itself upon her that the present could be no other than the visitor whose representations had been the cause of the dissolution of her engagement seven years ago, when, as now, she was on the eve of becoming the wife of Prince Algorouki. It was the overwhelming apprehension by which she was now deprived of all self-possession that overcame her disinclination to see the stranger, and gave birth to the opposite desire to see, to hear, to talk with that person, that thus she might *convince* her that she was deceived, formerly as well as now, if it was to repeat the same story that she had come this second time.

"Let her go into the parlour," said Sophia, endeavouring to speak with her usual calmness ; "I will come to her directly."

The instant Rosamond was gone, Lady Butwell, who noticed her daughter's agitation and at once understood the cause of it, said,—

"You do wrong in consenting to see any woman you know nothing of at such a moment as the present. She may be the means (a whisper would be enough) of destroying all your happiness in a moment."

Almost for the first time in her life, Sophia looked frightened, and as if she hoped her mother would be able to avert the threatened trial. It is on such occasions that true mothers appear like angels in the eyes of their offspring.

"Come," said she cheerfully, "I will see the woman first myself ;" and as Sophia consented by silence, she left the room.

On her way, Lady Butwell prepared herself for the interview by putting on her coldest, most inanimate, and repulsive manner ; but when she had entered the room, and allowed her eye to encounter that of the stranger, she felt herself humanized again as if by magic. What could she do when

standing in the presence of one so far in advance of herself in the favour of her Creator ; for the menial attire could not hinder the operation of that soul upon her own. She knew not why, but felt incapable of resisting an invitation,—which, coming without words, and, as it would seem, involuntarily, from the stranger, acted the part of a witness in her favour,—to treat her with the utmost confidence, insomuch that she could not even bring herself to question her, but left her to explain everything herself.

“ Pray, sit down.” This was all her ladyship could say, and this she said in her politest manner ; nay, had it been the Queen of —, she could not have spoken more politely. It was in Italian the stranger replied :—

“ It will suffice, perhaps, madam, if I disclose to *you* what I came to communicate to your daughter. She would remember me if she saw me as the individual who warned her, seven years ago, not to become the wife of the person who was at that time paying his addresses to her under an assumed name. He is now, it is true, in one sense no longer an impostor : Prince Algorouki is really his name, but the character of the man cannot be known to your daughter, or I am confident she would never marry him. Mr. Willibald Cowley could corroborate all I say.”

“ Pray, where does he live now ? ” interrupted Lady Butwell.

“ In the Franciscan monastery, near the village of —. He was professed there four years ago, and was ordained two years afterwards. He, madam, could corroborate all I say ; though, having promised not to betray him, he is too honourable to speak. But he will at least say, should you desire his testimony, that he believes me unlikely to utter a deliberate untruth. Be prepared now, madam, to hear what will fill you with dismay and astonishment. Prince Algorouki was not, as he represents himself, a mere *amateur* robber, but truly a *rapacious brigand*—a *man of blood* in every sense of the word. To my certain knowledge, he assassinated in cold blood, within the space of three years, six of his own comrades, and many travellers have fallen by his hand. Still, it would be my duty to conceal these facts, which, as it is, I communicate in confidence, if I had not the best of reasons for knowing that his heart remains unchanged. He still has in his service men who formerly belonged to the band ; and one of

these has secretly informed me that a reward of five hundred scudi awaits him who shall succeed in secretly assassinating me. This, at least, proves that he is changed in name only since I last spoke of him to your daughter. The world may have forgiven him, but a higher destiny awaits her than that of a vessel of the spirit that sways the imaginations and the hearts of worldlings. She is of too generous a nature to submit to a dictation which writes folly upon the favourite precepts of our Divine Redeemer."

An ashy paleness had spread itself over the features of her hearer as the stranger uttered these words: her agitation, indeed, was so great as for some time to deprive her of the power of speech. At last she was able to articulate these words:—

"I thank you."

"If," continued the stranger, "it would remove all doubt of my veracity, I will make these statements in the presence of the prince."

"Oh no," replied the other, "it will not be necessary. I quite believe all you say. It seems to confirm a number of strange misgivings I have been struggling with during the last three weeks."

The hugeness of this charge was exactly the feature which, coming from a person of the stranger's appearance, made it credible. Lady Butwell felt that it could be no invention of a mind like that of the speaker; whilst, viewed in its connection with the prince, one had only to be convinced that he was unprincipled, in order to be in a condition at once to recognize the probability of its being rather considerably short of the truth, than the least unfair.

As soon as the stranger had gone, Lady Butwell began to weep. She had never in her life wept so violently,—never experienced, to such an extent, the grief arising from the contemplation of the sorrows of another. She sat applying with both hands her handkerchief to her eyes, from which the tears literally gushed, and she was sobbing violently when Sophia entered the room, curious to learn the result of her mother's recent conference.

"What is the matter?" said she calmly. Without uncovering her eyes, Lady Butwell rose at the sound of her daughter's voice, and putting her arm round her neck, said,

"Poor child, you are destined ever to be disappointed and deceived."

"How?" said Sophia, somewhat abruptly.

"Oh!" exclaimed the other,—and then for a time she wept in silence, but continued soon,—“do not ask me! And yet,” she continued, again struggling with her feelings, “I ought to rejoice that we have been undeceived in time.”

“Pray, explain yourself,” said Sophia impatiently. Her grief sinking more deeply into her heart, the other now replied more energetically. “Oh,” she exclaimed, “that man!—that monster, rather!”

“Whom do you speak of? Is he already married?”

“Not that I know of; still *you* can never marry him.”

“Is there any new charge?” asked Sophia, “because the past is forgiven and must not be brought up again.”

“Think no more of him, Sophia. He is worse, much worse than you thought him at any time before.”

“What do you mean?”

“I cannot tell you; and yet the knowledge of the worst will at once destroy that affection which it would be sinful now any longer to entertain. Murder—murder! six times has murder stained his hands. And even at this moment would he, if it were in his power, shed the blood of a helpless fellow-creature, whose sole offence appears to be that she knows more of him than is convenient.”

For a moment Sophia staggered, as if struck by lightning, when these words reached her ears. But her father's footstep, as he passed the window without, attracting her attention, in the next minute the brow became knit; her eyes flashed, and she exclaimed joyously, “*He* will avenge me! he will lay low this wicked one!”

“Do not,” interposed hastily her mother, in a low, anxious tone, “seek to embroil your father with——”

Before she could finish the sentence, Sir Francis had entered the room. Their excitement struck him at once. His eye glanced inquiringly from one to the other, whilst he exclaimed, as if slightly irritated rather than alarmed, “What's all this about?”

“We were right before about Algorouki,” replied Sophia, with a rather wild look of exultation—pretended, perhaps, rather than actually felt. “He was what we thought him;

or, rather, a great deal worse. It seems he has committed six murders, and is trying hard now to commit another."

Sir Francis was both on principle, and inclined by his constitution to be, slow in changing his opinion of people's characters; and from having frequently, during his parliamentary career, become fully advised that there really is in the world such a thing as calumny, and, what is more, that this wonderful thing is very common, he invariably refused to credit, at first hearing, reports of the kind his daughter had just given him a specimen of. He laughed incredulously as she spoke, and said,—“Is that all? Verily, I thought you were above believing a story of this kind! Come, let us go up-stairs.”

When they had reached the drawing-room, Lady Butwell, who had previously distinguished herself for her incredulity, succeeded in obliging her husband to feel a little uneasy. She related to him all that had just happened, and dwelt much on the manners and appearance of the stranger who had given the information. As soon as she had finished, he rose from his seat, as if suddenly inspired with an involuntary belief in all he had just heard. He seemed striving to disengage himself from the impression, and, with a preceptorial look, which was lamentably inexpressive of an utterance from the abundance of the heart, he said to his wife,—

“You know little of the world, if you have not yet come into contact with that class of deceivers who have the identical air, emphasis, and voice which usually distinguish the sincere, because, having once known virtue by *experience*, they retain a clear recollection of all its accompanying signs and expressions.”

Lady Butwell made no reply. It seemed as though her husband's words had struck her dumb. During the ensuing pause in the conversation, a step was heard on the stair, which threw the whole party into a state of consternation. How should they receive him? The door now opened, and the prince himself entered.

The moment before, Sophia had seized some work. On this she now fixed her eyes and remained perfectly silent, the victim of an embarrassment which was not the less distressing because it was of brief duration. The sound of Algorouki's voice wounded her heart in all kinds of ways. She was

bewildered ; yet a mighty struggle was going on within her soul at that moment. In those few moments, some of the bravest acts of which the human will is capable were achieved by hers.

Perceiving that there was something wrong, the prince now drew near, and, taking a seat beside his *fiancée*, said, whilst he scanned her playfully,—“ Dear me ! what is all this about ? ”

“ You will know all in time,” replied Sophia, rising suddenly. Her action was eloquent of the fact that she was now also, interiorly, risen from him, and far removed from the influences of his spirit. But, in the next moment, her calmness was gone—a revulsion of feeling, too violent to be resisted by one so unaccustomed as she was to moderate such impulses, forced her to say to her father—she spoke with forced calmness, but so entreatingly as to be irresistible—she smiled at the same time,—“ Papa, secure him now ! We shall, perhaps, never have him in our power again ! ”

She seemed to dart by the eye the vindictive thoughts her brain had generated into that of her father at that moment. He was now past fifty years of age, but his physical energies remained unimpaired, and his principles and prejudices unchanged ; he therefore rushed upon the murderer, and, seizing him by the collar, exclaimed coolly, “ Come, my man, I think we have you now ! ”

Had the prince yielded to the first impulse that stirred within him as the hand of the father came in contact with his person, the latter might just as well have been committed, unarmed, to a mortal struggle with a full-grown Bengal tiger ; but Algorouki was now so habituated to the practice of that superficial self-control which especially denotes a participation in the inspirations of civilization, and so confident in the strength of his position in the world, which was every day evincing approbation of his pretensions, that he considered he could well afford to reply to this outrage with a mere verbal remonstrance, the tone in which he spoke being winningly reproachful. “ What on earth can this mean, Sir Francis ? ” he exclaimed. “ Is it possible that you can have again given ear to calumny, without first instituting an inquiry into the credibility of my enemy ? Reflect again on all that I have told you in explanation of the circumstances that

formerly seemed to confirm your suspicions. Is this anything more than a repetition of the old story? I feel confident that it is not, and that the same unfortunate creature who was the author of the calumny which deceived you in the first instance has been again imposing upon you to prevent my union with your daughter. She is one of those persons who fancies what she says is the truth, though there may be no particle of truth in it, because her desires are so keen that reason cannot live before them."

Sir Francis relaxed his grasp. He would not at this moment consult his daughter by looking at her: she therefore left the room, with an expression, however, which her mother, who witnessed it, had the mortification of perceiving indicated a fixed determination to have nothing more to do with her recent intended.

"Of this, nevertheless, I am quite certain," said Sir Francis with dignity, "that no additional amount of evidence in your favour will restore my daughter's confidence in you; nevertheless, I shall pursue, as a duty, the inquiry you challenge, and I promise you that I will not leave Italy till I have acquired such an insight into the merits of the case as shall suffice to render the public statement of my own convictions a complete *amende* for the injury your reputation may have sustained by Sophia's behaviour."

The style of this reply roused the ire of the haughty land-owner in such a manner that it was with the utmost difficulty he could keep it within bounds.

"Sir Francis," he said, "you need not trouble yourself. If it be your firm conviction that no possible amount of evidence would suffice to remove the impression your daughter has so hastily and so rashly admitted into her mind, such an inquiry would be useless, because the imputation cast upon my honour by the charge your daughter may think proper to bring against me in justification of her conduct towards me will but recoil upon herself, and make the world think her foolish as well as faithless."

"Nevertheless," replied Sir Francis, doggedly, and withdrawing his eyes from the face of the Italian, "I shall make the inquiry—for my own satisfaction, if for no other reason."

Lady Butwell was watching Algorouki's countenance at this moment, and she saw an expression pass over it which,

had it not been so very transient, would have excited her alarm. A gay, cheerful, forgiving look followed it, so instantaneously as almost to destroy the recollection of it, and lead to such an acceptance of the last as excluded all belief of its own promise.

"Well!" he exclaimed from the heart, and in a tone so frank as to cause Sir Francis and Lady Butwell to feel ashamed of their own apparent ill-nature, "if you like to do so, I can have no objection; and of this you may rest assured, that however unfavourable your opinion of me may chance to become, I shall patiently and forgivingly await the change which I am confident will ultimately follow, as time wears out the vessels of hatred whose overflowings give such a muddy look to the course of my life hitherto. Twenty years hence we shall be friends again, I hope. If you are living in England at that time, I will pay you a visit there, to laugh over the past with you; but at present it will best become me, I feel, to cease to visit you, and to consider that my engagement with your daughter is broken off."

He rose from his seat as he spoke, and tendered his hand first to Lady Butwell, then to Sir Francis, who both returned the shake in silence; then the bell was hastily rung, and the visitor withdrew.

During the next succeeding ten minutes the husband and wife remained in silence. Pacing slowly up and down the room, with one hand in the hind pocket of his blue tail-coat and the other engaged in repeated journeyings over his forehead, eyes, nose, and mouth, Sir Francis needed not to speak in order to convince her, who was so familiar with the language of his every gesture, that he was perplexed in the extreme. She knew, too, that a feeling of deep distress, which he endeavoured to conceal, had found its way into his heart, and therefore resolved to dissemble now her own anxiety, and to appear perfectly cheerful, whilst she said gaily—"My advice is, that we return at once to England, and think no more about the man. Why should we? What is he to us now, and what is ——— to us?"

"No; that will never do. What would be right and proper in a woman would be in a man——"

"You always appear to me to think that it is your business to play the magistrate wherever you go. Now, what

should you think of a foreigner in England who should act and talk as if he imagined no one else in the country had a thought of the public safety?"

"Pooh! in the present case I owe it to Algorouki himself to prosecute the inquiry."

"My dear Francis, did not he himself declare it unnecessary? No; it is your own pride."

"Pride! I declare to you that I do it only because I think that, for every reason, it is my duty to set the matter at rest by——"

"Do you imagine that you will *ever* set this matter at rest? Come, now, for once be guided by me. I understand perfectly what you are thinking of; but there is evidently another justifiable course—the one I recommend."

For a moment or two Sir Francis looked sheepishly at his wife, as if he were thinking of yielding. She strove not to appear to be conscious of his embarrassment. She looked at her work, and looked as calm as she could, but hoped most ardently that her words would prevail. Alas! now the spirit that once was her admiration, and which even now, when its dictates led not to a course that would not "pay," won for its victim the greatest share of her respect, was about to requite her partiality in the way befitting its true character. Conscious that through this he had won her esteem, the husband naturally hesitated, even at her bidding, as Sampson did about his hair, to renounce the pride which forbade compliance with wishes which were commonly only uttered as becoming the relation in which she stood to her husband, and with the view, perhaps, of causing an exhibition of the manly, fearless spirit the consequences of whose impetuosity she pretended to dread. What she said was therefore, in its effect, only equivalent to a challenge to stick to his own plan. She was speaking now in all sincerity, like the shepherd's boy when the wolf was really at hand; but her past follies had destroyed her credit as a guardian angel, and she warned now in vain.

"No," said the husband slowly and musingly; "I have determined what to do, and you know, Matilda, that when once resolved I never change for anybody."

CHAPTER XLIV.

My light to love, my love to life doth guide,
 To life that lives by love, and loveth light :
 By love to one, to whom all loves are tied
 By duest debt, and never equal right.
 Eyes' light, heart's love, soul's truest life he is,
 The crown of joy, the sum of perfect bliss.

R. SOUTHWELL, S. J.

Nor one of the Butwells slept a wink that night. The wounded pride of the daughter was busily engaged in inventing for itself all sorts of new balsams—the ingredients of which the reader may be sure were of a sufficiently penetrating character. Her chief aim was to gain that position with reference to Algorouki that enabled her to look upon the thieves and robbers she read of in the newspapers, not as fellow-creatures, but merely as beasts of prey, which, for his own security, man is obliged to hunt down and exterminate whenever he approaches their, or they his, near neighbourhood. But, as every experienced person well knows, a contact that is accompanied by intimacy is simply the exchange of the relation just spoken of for another, by which we lose the protection of a barrick for the sake of closer intercourse ; and therefore we must be prepared for a struggle of a highly discomposing character when anything occurs that makes us desire a cessation of the intimacy. What we could formerly have done through the strong arm of the law, we are now tempted to effect by a weapon we ourselves possess ; and what formerly could be done without violence to our sense of justice, we are now impelled to do by feelings of revenge or hatred.

Lady Butwell's reflections were of a very different character. Being of a gentle, unimpassioned disposition, her glances into futurity regarded principally matters which were calculated to smoothen or obstruct the way of life she hoped to follow to the end of her days ; and on the present occasion, therefore, her imagination, as the night advanced, magnified every danger which her understanding told her might be apprehended from the enmity of a person so powerful in every possible way as the rejected lover of her daughter. More than once, too, she

thought again on the character of that fleeting expression which preceded the clearing up of his countenance just before he took his leave. Her amiable disposition made the study of character so painful, that she never could be induced to engage in it herself or pay serious attention to remarks from others resulting from it. She never wished to gaze on *hearts*, the mysterious sources of those emotions whose traces on visages were nearly always regarded by her in the light of smiles and dimples. With these habits, she had gradually learnt to dread the sight of an *interior*, or rather to shrink from the belief that men had places within them where they debated *solus*, and considered how they should deal with such an enemy, or prove their gratitude towards such a benefactor. Her constant desire was, that all men should be like-brothers and sisters; she hated to hear of hell, and could hardly be brought to confess, though she could not refuse to believe in, the existence of the devil.

“ Hence loathed Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born !”—

this was the ruling speech of her spirit. Hence was her struggle all this night to check those thoughts which with such unusual and relentless importunity kept dragging her to the brink of an abyss, that she might gaze from thence on the perilous position of her husband.

The weather was extremely hot, and so sultry that nothing was gained by leaving open the windows all night but a marvellous addition to the throng of mosquitoes, whose spiteful song, as they swarmed over the gauze curtain that protected the bed, was frequently compared by her to the host of disagreeable thoughts by which her spirit was molested all the night through. How much she wished herself, with Sir Francis and Sophia, once again in “ Old England,” and how deeply did she resolve to give her husband no rest until she had succeeded in inducing him to comply with her wishes.

Sir Francis also was troubled with “ thick-coming fancies ;” but not being very imaginative, he contrived to maintain the character of the hero, notwithstanding sundry forebodings which left the character of the Prince Algorouki in anything but a favourable light.

At an unusually early hour he rose, and told his wife that he was going that day to see Willibald Cowley.

"I ought," said he, "to have gone when first we came here."

"Do you know where he lives?" said Lady Butwell.

"Yes," replied the other; "the convent is distant about thirty miles. I shall ride over this morning, and return in the evening."

"It is too far——"

"Oh, Black Sluggard will take me easily."

"Don't go alone," entreated Lady Butwell. "Grapple can go with you."

"Of what use will he be? To be sure, he can look after the horses, and he may take some oats with him."

"I would arm *him* too. Give him one brace, and take the other yourself."

"The nags' heels will be our best arms. Nothing can come near us, if I put him on Peter the Cruel."

Lady Butwell would have given everything she possessed, could she have persuaded her husband to go and take berths for them in a steamer which was just about to start for Civita Vecchia, instead of paying this projected visit to Willibald Cowley; but seeing that he was set upon going, she would not make him miserable by lamentations, but rather strove to start him duly provided with whatever seemed necessary to enable him to perform his journey in safety.

Sir Francis now went to his dressing-room, and having completed his toilet, he returned to take leave of his wife, and then descended to the stable-yard, where he found his groom, who had been told over-night that the horse would be wanted, ready with Black Sluggard.

"Is Peter the Cruel up to a journey this morning, Grapple?" said Sir Francis.

"It's just what he wants, Sir Francis," replied the other, in a very quiet voice. "I scarce know how I shall get on 'im, he's so fresh. I couldn't yesterday; none of these chaps could hold him for me."

"Take this horse back to the stable, and when you're ready, come and tell me yourself."

The master wished to give his servant a brace of pistols without being seen.

"You know, I don't expect an attack; but as we are going some distance into the country, we had better take arms."

"Certainly, Sir Francis; so I'll put on the holsters; they're quite clean."

"If there's any rifle-work—you will understand me—we must be off then at once, and Peter the Cruel will be teased a bit."

On returning to the yard, Sir Francis found that he must assist his groom to mount before he got on his own horse.

Sir Francis never gave less than £300 or £400 for a hunter; but then he always took care to have his twopenny-worth. A trainer, who had once been his groom, and was grateful for past kindness, helped him to the discovery of the horses, which he successively exhibited to the admiring eyes of the numerous "judges" with whom he came into contact; and Black Sluggard and Peter the Cruel were both horses of prodigious power. Peter the Cruel had a head and neck that you could scarcely look at without experiencing a thrill of terror. He was sixteen hands high, with girth and bone in proportion: he always looked as if he was raving mad, such an eye had he, such a nostril, such a power, owing to the length of his neck, of turning his head right round, and such a cruel habit of kicking deliberately with one leg any thing or body that he thought too near him. The way the groom contrived to mount him, on the present occasion, was by getting first on his master's shoulders, and thence slipping by the horse's neck into the saddle; whence Peter the Cruel had no more power of removing him than Sinbad the Sailor had the Old Man, who for several successive days rode him pickaback. Though of a somewhat milder mood, Black Sluggard was a better horse than his fiery companion: he looked lazy in the stable, and never left it without an appearance of reluctance. It seemed as if his big heart and capacious lungs required the influence of the air for a quarter of an hour before he became sensible of his own untiring power. He had a rage for work. Violent exercise seemed to give him strength. The air he took in on these occasions seemed more than enough to supply the demands of his vast energies.

Sir Francis had one dress, to which, without the slightest variation, he had adhered since he was twenty. This was a

dark blue tail-coat, always new, with gilt buttons; a buff waist-coat, with gilt buttons; doe-skin breeches and top-boots: his neckcloth was white, unstarched, and of the finest cambric; a superb cambric frill, extending to within three buttons of the bottom of his waistcoat, decorated his chest like the hackles of a game-cock.

He was tall, but rode admirably. He had certain fixed ideas about a seat, which had this to recommend them, that they favoured the theory which makes nature the originator of our ideas about grace. His legs being long, he rode rather short: his heel was sunk: he did not stick his legs out, nor *violently* turn his toes in. From the knee his legs dropped in a perpendicular line. The thigh and knee lay close to the saddle. The back was not hollowed like that of a trooper, nor bowed like that of a jockey; nor did he appear cocked up in the German fashion in his saddle. He was a quiet rider, and had a marvellously light hand. In trotting, he rose without any appearance of effort, and not high, for he was mindful of his horse's back, and could not bear to bump. For this reason, when beyond a canter, he left the backbone unencumbered, and stood in his stirrups, but hardly perceptibly.

A man of Sir Francis's breed never feels so fearless as when he is on horseback. This is because his courage is of the practical sort which is ever ready to manifest itself by the exposure of the person and the employment of physical energy. His horse, to such a one, gives, of course, a vast increase to his sense of power—this, we presume, is the reason why good cavalry officers are so frequently apt to exhibit an impetuosity of disposition that unfits them for positions demanding much circumspection. It was a fine morning, and the progress of our equestrians was very rapid,—it being the wish of Sir Francis to get through his fast work whilst the air was comparatively cool.

The road, as the reader will recollect, passed in the direction of the Villa Algorouki. It was Sir Francis's desire to pass that place unobserved, as he did not wish to have any further conversation with the owner, till he had completed his proposed inquiries. On this account he had made the greater speed, in the hope that no one there would be stirring at the time he passed. But whether he had accomplished his object

when, having got two or three miles beyond it, he relaxed his pace from a gallop to a footpace, he could not be certain, though he had not himself noticed anybody. On arriving at the village where Willibald had breakfasted with Father Volpicelli, it became necessary to inquire the way. The person first spoken to represented that there were so many cross-paths, many of which took directions so much alike, that it would be almost impossible for a stranger to advance rapidly without a guide.

"But, surely," said Sir Francis, who hated guides, "if I know the direction in which the monastery stands, I shall be able to choose those turnings which conduct you to it."

The man shrugged his shoulders, and called another, who said he was certain they would not arrive till late at night unless they took a guide. It seemed, therefore, necessary to follow the advice of the strangers.

"I must have a man who can be well mounted," said Sir Francis, "because I am in a hurry."

The men looked at one another,—they then approached an *osteria*. Mine host came out, and, having spoken to the milor, seemed to think a nag might be found.

"But be quick," cried the Englishman. "Don't be all day hunting for him."

The speaker was evidently a great milor—his horses told that; therefore did the landlord proceed to obey his voice with tolerable alacrity: neither did he experience any great difficulty in doing the will of another on an occasion that was so far removed in its character from one of a meritorious kind.

In the course of some twenty minutes the guide appeared,—the same whom the stranger had first addressed himself to. He was a trusty-looking fellow. His employer liked his countenance, and the journey was resumed with the same zeal with which it had been begun, only now the pace was more varied and less severe. The guide rode a little behind Sir Francis, directing, without stopping him, when they came to turnings, by exclaiming "Right!" or "Left!" On two or three occasions, however, they had to return and resume the path from which they had branched off, so that Sir Francis at last good-naturedly asked the man whether he really knew the way.

"*Si*, signor, certainly," replied the other; "but it is long since I have been it."

"Then you don't know it well enough to act as a guide. I hope now we shall have no more mistakes."

"No, signor. We are now where we may go quick, and that milor may not be interrupted when he comes to that rock, he will turn short to the right—the turf continues a good way beyond that point, so that we can gallop on."

The rock indicated in this direction seemed to terminate their present path at the distance of a mile from where they now were. Nothing could exceed the fitness of the ground here for a gallop. The turf exhibited the velvet texture which is usually only found in the hollows or on the summits of mountains. Hitherto they had been, though gradually, on the ascent. They were here on a dead level. The air, too, was refreshing, and Black Sluggard, who seemed to be only exasperated by what he had already done, whirled his able rider steadily along at the rate of about half a mile in a minute. The guide, of course, soon lost his place. Sir Francis moderated his pace in consequence, and Grapple strove hard to keep his distance of about one hundred yards. Never had that mountain solitude been trod by hoofs so disdainful of inglorious ease; yet can it be supposed that the eagle, who slowly soared above, admired the scramble in which he saw engaged their three lordships of the creation who scampered there? *Sic transit*, &c., his thoughtful figure, poised in the vault above, seemed over and over again to say as they sped on.

The untameable impetuosity of Peter the Cruel had nearly tired the brawny arms of the man of iron who rode him, when he saw his master turn to the right when he was within twenty or thirty yards of the granite knoll of which we have spoken before. The guide was following him, when, for some reason or other, he suddenly pulled up, with an exclamation of horror. Grapple, unable to stop his horse in the same sudden manner, turned him the other way, under the idea that Black Sluggard had come down. Having succeeded at last in stopping, he turned to see what had happened. Better far than we can describe them, the reader will be able to imagine his feelings when he found—instead of a green turf, a fallen horse, and his master anxiously inspecting the precious

limbs of his favourite—nothing but the distant sky and the edge of a precipice. We do not pretend to insinuate that Grapple noticed it ; but the reader will—our eagle, still undisturbed, winging his leisurely flight exactly over the giddy spot from which Sir Francis had just disappeared ; and now the deathless flight of wisdom seemed spoken of in the silent sky by those long untiring wings, which, *in* the world but not *of* it, cannot lose by death, because it loves not life.

The English groom, unable to speak a word of Italian, still could not refrain from exclaiming, in a tone that seemed to the Italian ludicrously calm, "Here's a pretty job !" He then turned to the guide, endeavouring to represent that he wished to descend to the spot where his master lay. The man understood him, and led him by a zig-zag path to the left of the path to the plain below. Here, immediately under the table-land, which displayed an almost perpendicular elevation of about 200 feet, ran a road, hard and dusty, the sight of which made Grapple's blood run cold as he hastened to the spot where he expected to find his master. Black Sluggard, in the midst of the road in a pool of blood, with his bowels obtruding, and biting the dust, was the first object that met his eye. A shallow pond, in general the haunt of water-wagtails, dragon-flies, and other merry lovers of the wilderness, washed the side of the road which was farthest from the cliff at this part. Rushes bordered it on the other sides ; it was beautifully clear, and from certain points of view reflecting, as it did, the many-coloured objects, the cliff, fragments of rock, rushes around, and here and there patched with the leaves of water-lilies, or discovering the white rock stained with iron marks which formed the material of the basin in which it lay,—it seemed peculiarly fitted for the recreation of spirits gentle and reflective like those of Walton, Sir Humphrey Davy, or Gilbert White. The eyes of Grapple, however, as they hurriedly glanced from the carcass of the horse to this pool, saw in it nothing beyond a something better to come into than the road, and as he yet indulged the hope that his master wasn't greatly hurt, and would live to recount to his hunting friends in Old England the particulars of the most awful "purl" he had ever had in his life, he continued his search.

"Here, my man, hold my horse," he exclaimed at last, dismounting.

The guide did as he was desired. At that moment two bare-footed friars approached. Had they had shoes on and smock-frocks, the groom would have taken them for good Samaritans; but he would not deign to beg the help of such chaps as they, and was going single-handed to lug his master out of the water, when one of them accosted him in English,—

"Let us go in—you will get terribly wetted. We have no shoes on—it will be nothing to us;" and in a minute the speaker raised the skirts of his habit, and tucked them into his girdle; his companion simultaneously did the same, and before Grapple could determine whether he would, or whether he wouldn't, be helped by these chaps, they had entered the water and had very carefully drawn the body out. The head most fortunately was not beneath the surface; it was resting upon some stiff rushes; but the remainder of the person was immersed. For some minutes it could not be ascertained whether the lifeless appearance really indicated death; but the friars, who seemed to understand so well what they were about that Grapple was content now to play the looker-on, having removed the neck-cloth and the waistcoat, and having each successively applied his ear to that part of the chest which is nearest to the heart, at last discovered traces of a faint pulsation. The presence of life was in the next minute indicated by a symptom which at the same time disappointed all expectations in the spectators of a happy issue. After two or three convulsive movements of the head, Sir Francis vomited a quantity of blood.

"All these wet things should be taken off," said the friar who had first spoken; "in fact, we can do nothing here. Our house is not very far from this; I think we could manage between us to carry your master to it, and then, perhaps, it would be as well that you should set off immediately to—where do you come from?"

"——. It's Sir Francis Butwell. Yes, I'll go straight off and let her ladyship know what has happened."

Sir Francis here raised his hand, and waved it, as if to forbid his servant. From this it was clear that he was conscious of what was going on, though he could not speak or open his eyes. The English friar—for his accent declared him

a native of Great Britain—now took off his cloak, and spread it on the ground. The body of the sufferer was then removed, and so placed that the head and trunk could be supported by the cloak.

"Now," said the friar, "my companion and I will take the heavy end, and you shall support the feet. You can take them like the handles of a wheelbarrow, and walk with your back to us. The guide can lead the horses."

"I'll just take this here saddle and bridle off the dead horse first," said the groom. "They'd be stolen if they were left on till we come back."

So Grapple was suffered to remove these valuables, and to attach them to Peter the Cruel, before he obeyed the directions just given. After about half an hour's walk by a foot-path that conducted them into the middle of the plain where the monastery stood, they arrived at the latter.

"This here's the place we was comin' to, I suppose," said Grapple.

"Is it?" said the English friar, with an inquiring glance.

"Lord! as sure as I'm alive, if that ain't Mr. Willibald Cowley," exclaimed Grapple, suddenly recognizing in the speaker an old acquaintance, for he had accompanied the Butwells to Italy on their first visit, and had frequently been at the Villa Algorouki when the Cowleys were its ostensible owners.

From the day of his first entrance into the convent Willibald had concealed from every one of the inmates the name he had borne and the station he had occupied in the world. He would have found it difficult, as we have before observed, to gain admittance, and much more to keep these matters secret, without the intervention of the Padre Volpicelli, whose deep insight into character had enabled him to see what satisfied him that he might, without danger, affect to know all requiring to be known about his pretended *protégé*, and thrust him upon the hands of the father guardian as one whom it might offend Heaven to reject, for no other reason than that he came to them nameless and penniless.

Naples and its affairs never formed the subject of the thoughts or conversation of the brethren, and, excepting by members of their own order, or secular priests who came to

make a retreat, they were never visited. Willibald had remained in profound ignorance of all that had happened to his own family and the Butwells during the period which had elapsed since his departure from the paternal roof, and it was, perhaps, the most meritorious of his performances as a religious, that he had steadily resisted every temptation to cast about for information relative to matters that, in one point of view, were so interesting to him. This is the *silence* so much commended by ascetical writers. A holding the tongue at stated periods has its great uses, when coupled with an exercise of this nature; but without this it does but give rise to a greater relish for conversation: nor is a solitude enlivened by the frequent arrival of letters and visitors of any other use than that of enabling us thoroughly to enjoy these things, in which it resembles the abstemiousness of those epicures who *train* for a feast on turtle-soup.

Some of our readers may be anxious to hear in what respect Willibald was a gainer by this loss, or whether his gains consisted exclusively of treasure in heaven. Many persons, surpassing him in vigour of character, lose, in every sense of the word, as far as this world is concerned, by such sacrifices; but he found that this silence gave birth to a new kind of hearing, which kept him constantly in breathless expectation, which seemed the road to heaven, and, as such, constantly presented new signs of the far-spreading influence of that blissful clime. He cultivated it, therefore, with the ardour of the philosophers who believe that nature reveals her secrets to those only who study her in silence and alone; and gradually got so deeply attached to it as to recognize in an interruption a wholesome mortification.

Willibald could scarcely refrain from laughing loudly at the extraordinary expression of Grapple's face, when he made the exclamation by which the reader was introduced, after a lapse of seven years, to our hero. It seemed as if the sudden discovery of the obligation he lay under to display a feeling of respect towards one in the dress of a Franciscan friar, had almost turned the man's head for life. Suppressing his merriment by a violent effort, and without making any reply, he approached the gate of the convent, and having rung the bell, informed the porter above of what had happened to the stranger they had brought with them, and desired him to ask

the superior's permission to bring him in. In a very few minutes the porter descended ; the gate was thrown open, and several of the community came out to assist in conveying the disabled man up-stairs, to a room which was usually reserved for the use of visitors. Here his wet clothes having been removed, and dry ones, as far as was requisite, substituted, he was placed in the homely bed, still in a state of apparent insensibility. Willibald, who was the apothecary of the community, and who had, by reading and observation, converted his own natural penetration into what might fairly be called medical skill, saw at once that Sir Francis had sustained a concussion of the brain, and that the violence of the fall had caused the rupture of a large blood-vessel in the chest. It was his opinion, therefore, that at present nothing could be done for him. He contented himself with bathing his temples with aromatic vinegar, and placing a piece of sponge charged with the same fluid to his nostrils. He had placed the patient on his right side, thinking that position the most favourable to the recovery of the brain from its present paralyzed condition. On the wall towards which the patient's face was turned (the bedstead was close to it) hung a small rudely-executed picture of Christ crucified. The whole thing, as a work of art, was so wretched, that to most people the only thought it would have suggested was, that it was disrespectful to use it ; but some few found an evidence of faith in the absence of art ; here, they averred, you saw expressed a love of the merits of the passion of our Lord so great as to render the artist or his employer careless of the means he had recourse to in order to recommend it to the devotion of others ; and the picture, accordingly, carried one's thoughts at once to the actual sufferings of Christ, and yet it seemed itself to say, " They have dug my hands and my feet—they have numbered all my bones." This small picture, mounted on a piece of card, and hung by a piece of red tape to a nail in the white-washed wall, a holy-water stoup made of earthenware, and a crucifix of oak, the figure being of brass, constituted the sole ornamental furniture in the room. A table, a prie-dieu, two chairs, and a book-shelf were the sole remaining articles ; and yet, with the Italian sun upon them, they were very far from seeming in want of more companions to give them a cheerful look.

There was no one in the room besides himself and Sir Francis, it being Willibald's opinion that the room should be kept as cool and quiet as possible. He was sitting near the bed, and had not applied the sponge for some time, and consequently did not see Sir Francis open his eyes. As soon as the nerve is broken, a tooth, if not removed by the pull that broke the nerve, stands dead in the socket, and may now be taken out without pain. It was exactly thus with the soul of Sir Francis. His fall had so far detached the soul from the flesh as to make him careless about the continuance of the connection. He felt now comparatively comfortable, though it seemed to him as if he was already as good as dead. When he opened his eyes, the first thing they fell upon of course was the picture just spoken of, which seemed to say, "They have dug my hands and my feet—they have numbered all my bones." As Sir Francis gazed at this, he began to feel within his heart a feeling, new to him entirely, of gratitude and respect towards that Being who now seemed to be pressing upon his attention, through that picture, a recognition of His title to the gratitude of the baronet. This worthy gentleman was not a little "put about" at observing suddenly how rudely, and churlishly, and detestably disrespectfully, he had hitherto always behaved towards this his Sovereign indeed. And at the same time he vehemently desired to make some reparation for his past ingratitude. But what could he do now? He turned suddenly his head, and recognizing the features of his old acquaintance, Willibald Cowley, who looked to him quite up to the mark of his present cogitations, and not needing any preliminary remarks, he pointed to the picture and slowly articulated three words,—

"You do it."

"If you leave all to me," replied Willibald, who understood what was going on in the mind of the other, "I will employ all the means placed at my disposal as a minister of God to establish a perfect reconciliation between you and your Redeemer."

After a silence of some minutes, the dying man, with great apparent difficulty, said,—

"I'll trust you."

"Prepare, then, at once," replied the other, "to receive conditional baptism. When you say you will trust me, you

mean that you are disposed to believe the Catholic Church, and to renounce the teaching of every other."

"I do firmly believe it, and I repent of ever having said or done anything opposed to its interests."

Willibald now took some water and administered conditional baptism.

"Now," he continued, "is there any sin you would confess before you die; because, as you are aware, Christ has empowered priests to forgive sins confessed to them in a penitent spirit, and with confidence in the power thus delegated."

It will surprise the Catholic reader to hear that nothing confessed by Sir Francis on this occasion appeared to Willibald to tally with the definition of a mortal sin. The reader knows almost as much of the state of his conscience as Willibald. The worst thing, in his own estimation, he was chargeable with, was the act of omission by which Willibald had been deprived till this moment of the letter from Captain Cowley. This the baronet had brought with him, and desired his attendant to take from his pocket. He seemed also to regret very much having written the letter in the *Times* which had had such an injurious effect on Willibald's reputation. Finally, the tardy fulfilment of the promise he had made Captain Cowley to seek his son, was now determined on as the offence which had drawn upon him the present apparent marks of the Divine displeasure.

Having absolved him, Willibald next proceeded to prepare him to receive the holy communion as *viaticum*.

"Now, then," said he, "you must believe that your Redeemer has come close to you. Think no more of me, His minister; but remember that these words, *He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood shall live for ever*, are verily His at this present moment, as they were when they were first uttered; and that, as the flesh that Christ took when He entered the womb of a human being was instantly converted into His Divine body and blood, so the bread He took and broke and gave to His disciples as His sacrificed body was in like manner instantly converted into His Divine body and blood. I am but the hand of my Lord whilst I present to you this 'Living Bread,' without which you have no life in you. Suffer then your Redeemer to enter your soul."

With a hungry eye the dying man turned eagerly to receive this "meat indeed;" but Willibald had yet to vest himself, and prepare for the administration of this solemn sacrament.

"I must go to the church to fetch it," said he; "and whilst I am gone, keep, if you can, thinking on these words, 'Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.'"

After he had been alone nearly ten minutes, Sir Francis heard at a distance the tinkle of a little bell, which drew nearer every instant. The sound at length had reached the door of his room, which was at the same instant thrown open. Then he beheld again his friend Willibald Cowley, whose glance he now thought had *ever* been, as it eminently was at the present moment, that of a saviour. They who bore the tapers and made the responses looked to the dying man, as they knelt on either side of the priest, like ministering spirits. He sat up in his bed with an appearance of ecstatic joy which no one could have believed his features capable of wearing. Willibald, before approaching him with the blessed sacrament, drew near, and in a low voice told him how he was to receive it. The other listened with a child-like eagerness; for, as his Lord was about to admit him into His kingdom, He had imparted to him in this short space of time the grace to *become as a little child*. Then the consecrated language of the Church, "*Corpus Domini nostri*," &c., sounded in his ear, and in the succeeding moment the outward act was performed which makes sensible the intimacy with which our Lord unites Himself to the faithful soul that is to live for ever.

Contented now, the baronet lay down to resume the painful task which every child of Adam is doomed to perform before he can enjoy the sweeter privileges of that union which is thus begun on this side the grave. He was several hours dying. But his friend Willibald was ever at hand to comfort him during the struggle; whilst, in the church of the monastery, prayers for the dying were said—twice by the whole community, and at other times continuously by separate individuals during the time.

At last the sufferer raised himself up, and looked wildly round till his eyes rested on the features of his attendant. They looked eagerly at him for a few moments; then they

closed, and, after one desperate struggle, during which Willibald held him firmly, he "fell asleep" in the arms of his father in Christ.

The community were soon after summoned to the chamber of death to recite the litanies and prayers customary on such occasions. This they did in the settled but buoyant tones of men accustomed to live in hope of a joyful resurrection for themselves and for each other—not valuing their own lives, but rather hating them, that they might find them in the next world—and ever eager to assist each other in the scramble from this pit of woe into the safe society of the blessed spirits, who enjoy the sight and the conversation of their true Father, and their true Brother, and their true Spouse.

Willibald would not suffer Grapple to return till the following morning. He assisted him in making "Peter the Cruel" comfortable for the night.

"A rare horse you've got here," said he, as they stood together in the stable.

"T'other was the horse," replied the groom—"the one master rode to-day. That *was* a horse. I never see a better, to my thinking. It's a thousand pities he was killed."

"What caused the accident?" continued Willibald.

"The guide could tell that best. I don't think he knew the way himself. He made several mistakes before."

"What! did he give a wrong direction?"

"I suppose he did. But I can't speak Italian, and so I don't know how it arose; but to me it looked just like that. Master rode a little in front. His horse wasn't running away—and he never bolted in his life. He was a horse that 'ud always go straight, no matter what you put him at. If it was a dead wall, he'd agone through it if he couldn't agone over it. The guide rode close behind. Well, when they come pretty near where the place is (you couldn't see anything of it before you come pretty close to it—some trees hide it), master rode straight off to the right instead of to the left, and the guide was following, till he come in sight of the pit—then he pulled up, but master went right over."

"That shows that the guide did *not* know the way. Could he have foreseen the consequences of his ignorance, it would have been very wrong of him to undertake to act as guide. Now I will show you where you are to sleep."

CHAPTER XLV.

LADY BUTWELL had passed the night in an agony of suspense, and when, early the next morning, the terrible news reached her that Grapple had returned alone, and when, tearing open a letter from Willibald Cowley, she found that her worst apprehensions had not been without foundation, though the source of the danger had been mistaken by her, she forgot every lesson she had ever read or taught on conformity to the will of God. Her mind detached itself from the person of the Origin of all good things—the All-wise and the All-powerful, and she was engulfed in self, esteeming herself the most miserable, the most pitiable, and the most helpless of women. She screamed and tore her hair off by handfuls like a barbarian, and exhibited every other mark of that degree of grief which, when cleverly expressed by words, is dignified by critics with the name of tragical. She detested herself for having previously supposed such a fate possible for *him*, so little could she sympathize with the counsels which had provided for a being she was in the habit of adoring and loving much more than her Creator, an end so premature, so sudden, so truly miserable. There was much of the most unequivocal selfishness in all this grief; for she felt most keenly that, in losing Sir Francis, she had lost “her better half.” What was she now? What could she do now? Who would respect her now that the world was no longer to be taught by the example of her husband how much she deserved to be respected! She felt like a lady accustomed to dazzle by the splendour of her attire and equipages, suddenly compelled to appear in cast-off clothes. Everything she possessed stood registered now, in her heated imagination, as a vast collection of expensive but spurious goods. Her carriages, servants, houses, dresses—all seemed alike—she loathed the thought of each. “Vile!” she exclaimed, at one time; “filthy! I despise, I abhor the crawling things that survive the being whose pleasures they once ministered to; it was only in him that I deigned to cast upon them the eye of favour, and, now that he is gone, my fancy for them is also gone for ever. Hateful, hateful world! I will never be

at peace with thee again ; there shall be no end to my complaints till I die. No creature shall console, no comforter shall approach me."

In this mood, the lady continued the whole of the day, and on the following morning she was found to be in the same excited state, and quite unfit to be consulted respecting the funeral of her husband. When asked where she wished him to be buried, she replied angrily, "Don't ask me such a question ; I will have nothing to do with it. *I* had nothing to do with his death, and so I leave it to others to decide where he shall be buried."

The behaviour of Sophia on this sad occasion was quite the reverse of this. She was sitting in her own room when Rosamond Perrywinckle knocked for permission to enter, that she might inform her mistress what had happened.

"Please, miss," said she, "I've bad news to tell you. You won't be frightened ?"

"Tell it at once !"

"Please, miss, Grapple is come back ; but your poor pa's fell down a hole and—and"—here Rosamond began sighing and sobbing—"is broke his neck."

Sophia frowned, turned pale, and then, without speaking, she went to confer with her mother, whom she found seated in an arm-chair, leaning back, and with two fingers against her cheek as a support, and the other hand resting on the arm of the chair, something in the way the left hand is represented in Raffaele's celebrated portrait of Pope Leo X. (?)

As Sophia entered, the mother gazed wildly and reproachfully at her, her eyes moved angrily about, and the agitated state of the features proclaimed the ungovernable condition of her feelings. The letter containing the fatal news seemed to have been tossed away, for it lay on the floor at some distance from her. Sophia felt a little disgusted at these appearances, so she took up the letter and, without speaking, left the room to read it at leisure ; it ran as follows :—

"DEAR MADAM,—I was agreeably surprised at hearing that you still continue in the enjoyment of good health, I may even add, that you are still *alive* ; for so sudden and frequent are the exits from the stage of this world of its various actors, and so sudden do we find that *our* favourites are also

the favourites of Time, that for some time past I have purposely accustomed myself to suppose all my friends dead, and nothing left to me but to die too ; that I may, by the mercy of God, follow them, as quickly as may be, into the world where the sorrows of death can trouble us no more. By following this plan, I secure myself from many afflictions ; because it is only those who oppose the stream that feel its force, and are beaten down by it. Early this morning I visited a neighbour who was dying, and he expired in my presence. Shortly afterwards I fell in with another fellow-creature, who was also in a dying state ; this was your husband, and he, too, some little while afterwards, breathed his last. In coming here, by a misdirection on the part of the guide, who does not appear to have known the way, or by a misunderstanding on his part, he rode over a hidden precipice, and was so much injured that he did not survive the fall more than four hours. I have only to add that your excellent husband made a most enviable end ; for, though he had lived a Protestant, he exhibited at the end a desire to submit himself to the yoke of faith ! He was re-baptized conditionally ; he made a virtual confession, and was absolved by one to whom Christ has given the power of binding and loosing ; and finally, he was so fortunate as, at this latest hour, to be fed with the meat that secures to the faithful soul eternal life.

“ My superior desires me to say that, if you approve it, the precious remains of this favoured child of Heaven can be interred within the precincts of the monastery ; which is usually regarded by the faithful as a desirable place of sepulture. As it is necessary, in this hot climate, to bury the dead very expeditiously, we shall be obliged by as early an answer to this question as you can conveniently give.”

The idea that her late father, who ever seemed to her so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the world, was now the companion and the friend for ever of the Redeemer of the world, lifted all the sympathies of Sophia's soul, in a way which almost forced her to fall upon her knees, and to utter the words of the psalmist, “ What is man that Thou art mindful of him ? ”

She also shed some tears now ; but they were very different tears from those that were pouring in such floods down the

cheeks of her mother. Hers were simply tears resulting from the clear vision she had, at that time, of the gracious condescension of the Majestic Son of the Most High. They were the language of admiration, too profound, too much a thing of the soul, to be expressed by words.

It would have been agreeable to her to continue in this state, to weep on and pray; but she hardly felt fit for so sublime a conversation, and therefore very soon seized the pen, and wrote as follows, in reply to Willibald's note:—

“DEAR SIR,—The melancholy tidings of my poor father's most sad end have so deeply affected my mother, that she has entirely lost the power of reflection; so that, without consulting her, I have taken it upon me to answer your letter. I am utterly unable to account for the change in his religious feelings referred to in your note; but as I am equally confident that you could never be prevailed upon, by any consideration, to misrepresent them, I think I shall be acting in accordance with what my mother will think upon the subject when she recovers, in begging you to give our very best compliments and thanks to your superior, and to say that his kind offer to inter the remains of my father within the precincts of the monastery is most gratefully accepted by us. There are circumstances connected with my father's death, upon which, at another time, I should be glad to speak. Present our united compliments to your reverend superior, and believe me, dear sir, very sincerely yours,

“SOPHIA BUTWELL.

CHAPTER XLVI.

AMONG the contents of one of Sir Francis Butwell's pockets Willibald found a packet directed to himself. It contained two letters; one was from his father. That the reader has already perused; the other had the following words, in Captain Cowley's handwriting, inscribed upon it:—

This letter was written by Mrs. Cowley, and directed—
“To Her Majesty the Queen of Heaven, Poste Restante, Roma.” The contents were as follows:—

“Having from my youth been accustomed to regard your Majesty as the possessor of enormous influence in Heaven (here, indeed, the cry is, that your divine Son is defrauded by your contrivance of much of that esteem and honour which is due exclusively to Him), I confidently address you in the present emergency. For it is yourself only who can help me, when the very ministers of God, the representatives of your divine Son, are against me. This, Heavenly Mother, is my case:—I have—I had at least—a son, whose nature was so noble that I could not but revere him when he was yet but an infant. Strange fancies filled my mind at that time, Heavenly Mother. I was wont to compare myself to you, and to think, as I gave suck to a being that I revered, that I understood the feelings of her who brought forth and fed with her own milk the Son of God. But too soon this pleasing delusion was dispelled; when, as he grew up, my son seemed only desirous of convincing everybody that he was like the rest of men; for as your divine Son worked miracles to prove his divinity, mine performed miracles too, for he frequently committed venial sins, to prove that he was no better than his neighbours. Then it was, Heavenly Mother, that the ministers of thy divine Son regarding him, only as the rest of men, whereas his sins were but acts of condescension committed in a spirit of humility, though, I grieve to say, not in a spirit of understanding, or perhaps even glad to see a soul so exalted thoroughly subdued, and by its obsequious submission to them enhancing much the lustre of their priestly dignity, suggested that he should put

on that penitential habit which, though first worn by a saint, is now more frequently than any other assumed by men who are dead to the world, not by mortification, but by a loss, through wickedness, of the world's esteem. Alas, Heavenly Mother, is it strange that I should have vehemently opposed this endeavour? Why should this almost perfect being be made to look foul—rotting with remorse or growing fat upon the quietude of a life adapted only in general for slug-like natures? Does not your divine Son warn against placing a light beneath a bushel? Therefore I declared my son should never be a Franciscan. But as women are forbidden to speak in the church, my words were despised, and several bishops joining in the cry, in order to deprive my speech of its efficacy, gave out that I was possessed. They spoke too soon, for I was not possessed till they, misleading my poor husband, obtained through him the victory, which you now witness. Willibald is a Franciscan, and I am confined to a madhouse. I write to you, Heavenly Mother, because no one, I believe, ever had recourse to your protection, implored your aid, or sought your mediation, without obtaining relief; I, therefore, confiding in this your goodness, hasten to you, O Virgin of Virgins, Mother of God, to you I come, before you I stand, a sorrowful penitent; Mother of the Eternal Word, despise not my words, but kindly hear and grant my petition. Yes, Heavenly Mother, I am confident you will speak to these misguided men, and that you will force them to set me at liberty."

With this epistle in his hands he seemed to be taking his mother's soul to his superior. The old man read it attentively, and then said—"This *must* be heard. Our Blessed Lady will never turn a deaf ear to such an appeal, even though it come from a maniac; but it will extricate her soul from the delusion that sets it at variance with the best and holiest wish with which it ever pleased the Almighty to inspire your heart."

Willibald thanked his superior and withdrew.

CHAPTER XLVII.

It is, perhaps, almost as well for us that "it never rains but it pours," that disasters generally follow quickly upon one another's heels, for thus are we, as it were, made drunk by the extra cup. Nothing describable occurred within the Butwells' residence during the fortnight succeeding Sophia's second disappointment and the death of Sir Francis. Nobody even had any thoughts worthy of record. Sophia, of course, wrote a long letter to Emily Wortley, minutely detailing all that had happened during the time that had elapsed since the completion of her last epistle; in which she had so exultingly *proved* the truth of all she wished her friends to think, with herself, of the Prince Algorouki.

Paying visits and writing notes of condolence were among the number of the social duties which Lord Slothorpe chose to make a point of punctually performing. Lady and Sophia Butwell, therefore, had not been forgotten nor neglected by him during the fortnight succeeding the death of his friend Sir Francis, whose place of sepulture he had also visited before he was admitted to an interview with the chief mourners.

It was from the lips of the prince himself that he had first heard of the rupture between Algorouki and Sophia. It had created a great sensation in the fashionable world—greater much than that occasioned by the death of Sir Francis,—the general impression being that some evil-disposed person, instigated by feelings of envy, had whispered in the ear of Sophia something about the prince, which, *even if true* (thus ran the language of the *soi-disant* charitables), ought never to have been communicated to *her*. The way of the world, in the eyes of the world's votaries, is a sacred way; consequently, the unknown originator of this rupture, who had presumed to set the heel of condemnation upon its glossy surface, was as worthy of death in their eyes as was St. John the Baptist, according to the judgment of Herodias.

To his friend Slothorpe the prince played the injured but forgiving friend to perfection. He said little, but so directed the imagination of his visitor as to leave him better satisfied of his innocence than he would have been had he entered at

once on a long and ingenious defence. Besides, Lord Slothorpe was wholly unskilled as an appraiser of *evidence*. Having a cultivated taste, he had also confidence in the accuracy of what might be called his intuitive perceptions, and these, on the present occasion, did nothing but echo the prince's whisper about his being an injured man. Still he could not obtain the prince's permission to try his hand as an intercessor. Here he found, as he thought (and it was natural enough that it should be so—nay, in his estimation, commendable too—) the pride of the man in the way. Little did his lordship guess that there was nothing Algorouki so much wanted now as that the struggle should *cease* as soon as possible, and the Butwells go away.

Lady Butwell, without knowing anything of the course of his thoughts, was quite disposed to act in the way he hoped she would. She had again and again, since her husband's death, expressed her regret that he would not be guided by her, and return to England without prosecuting his invidious inquiry; and she was even tempted to attribute his death to the offence given to Divine Providence by his obstinacy in opposing her wishes.

But, for many reasons, Sophia retained, in the midst of her afflictions, the desire and determination (if possible) to sift the matter to the bottom. She thought *she* would now do what her father had wished to do, and she was waiting till an opportunity should offer itself for the commencement of this enterprise, when Lord Slothorpe called.

It was whilst he was in the room that she resolved to convert him into another Sir Francis. The drift of the following conversation will show, however, that it was his own affection, at least as much as her cleverness, through which had been acquired the influence she had so long exercised over her father's mind.

Some conversation on other matters having taken place, Lord Slothorpe, in reference to the rupture, about which he had been for some time on the look-out for an opportunity of speaking, said, with a mild but half-reproachful glance:—

“I sympathize with my friend Algorouki.”

“Will you, my lord,” replied Sophia, briskly, “do what my father would have done had he lived? Will you inquire of Mr. Willibald Cowley whether the statements made by the

person to whom I am indebted for the information which determined me never to become the wife of the prince are correct? She referred mamma to him as being well qualified at least to tell to what extent her general veracity might be depended upon."

"Willibald Cowley!" replied his lordship, laughing a little, as if amused at the simplicity of the speaker; "my dear Sophia, if you knew as much about *him* as I do, you would find in the reference only the condemnation of the informant. I assure you there is not a greater scamp in the country. The people he lives with are nothing but thieves; they are at least the conscious receivers of stolen goods, inasmuch as they are supported by the numerous banditti who infest those hills."

"I don't believe it, my lord," replied Sophia, politely; "not one word of it."

Lord Slothorpe bowed, and put the gold head of his clouded cane to his lips.

"Are you personally acquainted with Willibald?" resumed the other. "Do you know anything of his family?"

"It has ever been a rule with me," was the reply, "not to become intimate with persons of whom I know no good. By this I would not pass for what I am not—a particular person. But I distinguish between the frail, who are yet entitled to be styled people of honour, and those who are wholly unprincipled. In such a place as —, if I were not to follow such a rule, I should soon be unvisitable by people like yourselves. Following this rule, I really feel that Cowley is the last person in the world in whose favour I ought to make an exception."

Sophia raised her eyes, and for a moment seemed about to answer; but slowly withdrawing them, she remained silent, as if resolved to say no more on the present subject. Some time after Lord Slothorpe had left, she exclaimed to her mother, "I now, for the first time, understand the spiritual meaning of the word *world*. The world has all the devil's *malice* in it without his *wit*; so that I would much rather have to argue with the fallen angel than to wage a war of words with a wise one of the world. Ah, my soul! dost thou at last begin to experience painfully what is talked so much of by the experienced, *the tug of war*? and must I, to conquer thee eventually, O world! fly from

thee now? Fain would I set my foot upon thee publicly at this moment, and cry out, to the confusion of all enemies of the truth, '*Quis ut veritas!*' But I am not strong enough for that—it must suffice me, therefore, to be certain *within* that I am right, and cherish, rather than *assert*, the truth—to be certain that I have thrust from me an evil thing and not a good—that I have spurned an enemy, not a servant, of the Eternal—this is what I aim at, and with this I shall be contented."

Yet soon after the occurrence of these reflections, she found, on further self-examination, that she could never bring herself to speak to Willibald Cowley on such a subject. "The truth is," she said, in continuation of a conversation on the subject, "I am already satisfied—I *believe* that woman; and therefore, when we go to see the grave I shall not allude to the subject."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

LORD SLOTHORPE, after the interview with Sophia just recorded, began to befriend the prince in real earnest, by visiting nearly every family of distinction in —, and relating there the particulars of his interview with Sophia; but in such a manner that they could not fail of satisfying his listeners that a reprehensible credulity on her part demanded from them the continuance, in an increased degree, of their confidence in the integrity of the prince. Such language from Lord Slothorpe soon had the effect of kindling the public resentment against Sophia; so that in a little time the prince began to entertain the hope that Lady Butwell and her daughter would have reason to feel that they had become obnoxious to the court.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Weigh not His crib, His wooden dish,
 Nor beasts that by Him feed :
 Weigh not His mother's poor attire,
 Nor Joseph's simple weed.

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 The persons in that poor attire
 His royal liveries wear ;
 The Prince himself is come from Heaven,
 This pomp is prizéd there.

With joy approach, O Christian soul,
 Do homage to thy king ;
 And highly praise the humble pomp
 Which he from Heaven doth bring.

R. SOUTHWELL, S. J.

WHEN the widowed Lady Butwell had sufficiently recovered from the effects of her recent misfortune to be able clearly to understand that she alone was to reign where hitherto the painful sense of the responsibility of her position had never been experienced by her, she regretted she had not had the body of her husband sent to England to be interred in the family vault. She was resolved at the same time to visit the grave, and see, in its presence, whether she could bear to leave the remains of her husband where they were.

Willibald, accompanied by the Padre Volpicelli, had visited them once since the funeral. To this worthy pastor both ladies had simultaneously taken a very great fancy ;—it would be improper to dignify by a more decorous appellation the irreverent feeling of partiality which had been involuntarily aroused in them by his exuberant charity. Being both what he would have called “fine ladies,” they had not failed to view with horror the stubble of a two days’ beard on his snuffy lip and dark fat cheek, and their flesh had “crawled upon their bones” at the sight of his nails, which, like the summits of the Alps, were charged with eternal matters which had no business to be there. They little knew, these good ladies, that these offences were not altogether the result of simplicity. The practice so familiar to the continental clergy,

of employing, in addition to their cassock or habit, these more effectual repellents of the sensual element, which is so apt to steal into the feeling of reverence with which "the devout female sex" constantly approach them, is at least only chargeable with the fault of violence; which is obviously a much less objectionable error than the excess so frequently conspicuous in the practice which prevails in England and Ireland, of dressing neatly in order to edify and *attract*. All have not the exalted virtue of a St. Francis of Sales; there may, therefore, be a good excuse for many, at least, of those who shrink from an attempt to observe his rule and that of St. Bernard in these matters.

When, therefore, Lady Butwell and her daughter had made up their minds to visit the convent, it naturally occurred to them that the padre would be just the person to apply to, to go with them. He accordingly accompanied them there. He treated them at once as his children, and a paternal love flowed from him all the way in every word, look, and gesture, with the spontaneous exuberance of a hot spring. He seemed already to have got hold of them both; and they internally, but only, as they pretended to themselves, for the fun of the thing, submitted to it. It should be borne in mind at the same time, that on his side all proceeded with the profound gravity of one who was acting from a sense of duty, and as if no other way were possible to him. We speak here of manner only. They conversed on other matters. Amongst other things, both the ladies having beset him with well-pointed questions on the subject, the padre spoke thus of Willibald Cowley:—

"I know he was confined a whole year in a dungeon in that castle, and that, whilst there, Prince Algorouki, then known only as Carmen Festa, used every effort to corrupt his heart; and that he particularly sought to induce him to become his assistant at a time when he despaired of removing, by his own unsupported testimony, certain misgivings relative to his own respectability and sincerity, exhibited latterly by Sir Francis Butwell, when, during your first visit to Italy, he was paying his addresses to yourself. I am convinced that his refusal to give any information about Carmen Festa arose from a promise made to that effect, on condition that he should be allowed to return home. He is a person of great virtue.

I have often heard his superior speak of him ; who also knew him whilst he was with the robbers."

On arriving at the monastery, the ladies, with their companion, were shown into the reception-room, where the superior presently joined them. This individual appeared to them painfully distant in his manner. But for this very reason, they were the more inclined to treat him with respect. On understanding that the object of their visit was to see the grave of Sir Francis Butwell, he took them to the conventual cemetery. This was a small yard, at one end of which was a mortuary chapel. The surrounding walls had each three tiers of recesses, deep enough to receive a coffin of any length. Many of these were already occupied, and were sealed with a stone, on which was engraved the name of the occupant. The last in one row which was thus secured, exhibited the name of Sir Francis, the sight of which struck Lady Butwell to the earth, and set Sophia weeping violently. Fortunately, the padre was more accustomed to the sight of such paroxysms than the superior, and he did not hesitate to lift and place in a sitting attitude, with her head leaning back against the wall, the afflicted widow.

On recovering, as she opened her eyes, they fell upon the large crucifix which stood in the middle of the cemetery, at the foot of which was a figure of the Mother of Christ. On these she sat, gazing in silence for nearly a quarter of an hour without speaking, the padre watching but not speaking to her. He observed at last the approach of an expression denoting the sudden entrance into the soul of a cheering thought.

"It is well that he should be here," she said. "I like this place, because I see that pains are taken here to make us ever mindful of the sufferings and merits of our Redeemer, and of the goodness and affection of his mother, who, by her devout attention to him during his trials in the flesh, set us all an example we ought never to forget."

Sophia had walked away to hide her tears, and she pretended to be deeply interested in reading the short Latin inscriptions which appeared at the ends of the graves. But all the while, her soul, goaded by the sight of the narrow limits of this last resting-place of her father's remains, was struggling violently to be consoled again, as it was for a few short moments when

first she read Willibald's letter giving an account of her father's death. But on the present occasion she was left to manage matters for herself.

At this moment, Willibald came into the cemetery. Sophia at their previous interview had become painfully sensible of the cleanness and unimpressibility of Willibald's heart. We say painfully, because the state of his feelings made her conscious of the disorder which reigned within her own interior. This discovery, however, had not been without its good effect. "What corrupt creatures we are!" she had said, as the new light entered her mind, "always wishing 'to be beloved,' and to have undeclared *liaisons* in every direction, whilst we pass for virgins, and, if married, are reputed even by ourselves the model of wives!"

Willibald, she had observed, had so got away from his own senses that he seemed no longer able to see her face and eyes aright; in short, he looked now like one of those men who don't appear to be capable of the perception which is the soul's incentive to love; but in this he quite differed from them, that his penetration seemed to be vastly increased, so that, instead of the brightness of the eyes and the beauty of the character, he saw now only the diseases of the soul. A feeling of resentment was the first fruit of this discovery; but when she saw again that the man was not mistaken, she felt deeply ashamed of herself for having been tempted to quarrel with him, because he seemed involuntarily to see exactly how it was with her. At present she approached him divested, as far as possible, of all aims at imposition.

"I must be what God has made me with *him*—nothing else will go down."

This was her thought as she went to greet him, and joined the conversation which had already begun between the padre, her mother, and the new comer.

"By being buried here," he was saying, "he will share the benefit derived from the masses we are constantly saying for the souls of our departed brethren."

"Oh!" said Lady Butwell, freely, "I can never believe that he is not already in heaven—in the actual presence of God."

"We should all hope so; and there are many here who are as confident as yourself that he went straight to heaven

when he died ; but still you will not *blame* us for praying for him as a precautionary measure, since we cannot be *certain* that, like the great mass of persons who die daily, his soul was not extremely out of tune, and unfit to accompany with its song of eternal praises the heavenly choir."

" I see," continued Willibald, glancing at Sophia, " that these expressions to her sound very much like those of an obstinate theorist who never neglects an opportunity, by suddenly flashing it upon the understanding, to captivate him with it."

" I am still unable," replied Sophia, " to understand how my father, who has been distinguished all his life by his hostility to the Catholic religion, could, during the last hour of his life, become convinced of its truth, and go so far as to signify a desire to die professing it."

" It signifies little what a man has professed during his past life, if he have ever acted conscientiously, as we learn from St. Paul, who said of the Gentiles what is applicable by us to those not having the advantage of a knowledge of the true religion, ' When the gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature those things that are of the law, these having not the law are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness to them,' —these will never fail, at the end of their career, of receiving the *refusal* of salvation, which, you know, is only tendered thus on this side the grave. Perhaps your father was never guilty, during the whole of his life, of such a violent resistance to the dictates of his conscience as amounts to the guilt of mortal sin : is it, then, so strange that, when his end was come, God should send one to admit him to a participation in the merits of his Redeemer ? You will observe that it was himself who first expressed a wish to be aided by me at that moment ; now, *my aid could* be no other than that of a Catholic priest : it was, therefore, that aid he sought."

" He wanted aid of any kind," replied Sophia ; " so that, had a Methodist been near him at the time, the prayers of the Methodist would have been equally acceptable."

" We must judge of the nature of a man's desires at such a moment by what he actually gets. It is not long since that I heard of a Catholic who, on her death-bed, refused the aid of a priest, and demanded that of a Protestant. What

was my inference on hearing this? No other, of course, than that she had renounced on her death-bed the religion she had hated during life. I consequently trembled when I heard of the case. And here let me ask whether you heard, with a feeling of terror, the particulars of your father's last moments?"

Recollecting the extraordinary increase of faith, and the lively gratitude towards her Redeemer she had experienced at that moment, Sophia smiled a negative, as these words were put to her.

"Yet," replied Willibald, "if the Protestant religion were true, you ought to have experienced such a feeling; because what greater sin is there than that of renouncing our religion either formally or impliedly?"

"My father never would have renounced his religion."

"I believe it," replied Willibald; "he was not, therefore, renouncing, but embracing, his religion the moment before he died."

The expression of the speaker at this moment was painfully indicative of that deep fidelity which sometimes manifests itself by an appearance of indifference as to the welfare or happiness of the being spoken to at that moment. When he had spoken, Willibald seemed to banish Sophia from his thoughts, and she, in consequence, felt internally distressed, like one being cast away, and she felt inclined to say accordingly, "If I walk not with thee, whither shall I go; thou hast the words of eternal life." But before she could revive the conversation, a bell within the convent called Willibald away. Sophia sighed as he withdrew, not because she loved him according to the flesh, but because she desired to remain in the company of such as he, and never again return to gossip with the crowd who are "married and given in marriage."

"As for me," she said presently to the padre and her mother, "I don't care what religion I am of, provided I can dwell with those who I feel are thoroughly sincere. I admit there is an obvious and unmistakeable reality about the faith of Catholics which distinguishes them from most other religionists. A 'serious' Protestant always appears either a fool or a humbug: it is not so with bigoted Papists, as they are called, who always appear more sensible and more

sincere than those of the same religion who are styled liberal."

The padre laughed good-humouredly at this explosion, and said,—

"When you have remained here as long as you please, I would show you the church. There are some pictures in the monastery done by one of the community,—an Englishman by the bye,—which I am sure you will like to see."

Soon after this they were invited to take some refreshment. The room where the cloth was spread had an air of its own that filled the minds of the strangers with those soothing thoughts which the interior of a cottage inspires, where poverty has not extinguished the love of cleanliness and order. The sweet odour of Nazareth was there: this was not Sophia's thought at the time; but she devoured with her heart the spirit of the place, and felt stirring within her the first beginning of the love of holy things as she sat down to partake of the plain repast which had been provided.

"Why," said she presently, "do the Franciscans have everything so plain? There is no merit in that, when, if they pleased, they could have it otherwise."

"They don't inquire," replied the padre, "whether there is a merit in it or not; but they do it simply because they fancy it."

"But I thought monks shrank from the gratification of their fancies!"

"Of some they do, but not of all. They are not altogether different in their nature from yourself. You have some fancies you would not gratify, and some you would almost make a merit of gratifying. In reading the life of Christ in the holy Gospels, have you never felt inclined to compassionate our Blessed Lady when she was compelled to pass in a cave the night on which her divine Son was born?"

"No, I cannot say I have."

"Well, St. Francis, the founder of this order, did, and to such an extent that he had a fancy ever after to honour that poverty by wearing the dress constituting the costume of the country people who lived in the neighbourhood of his native town—in short, by becoming a poor man: his thought being one which would naturally occur to every devout mind on first becoming fully sensible of the intention of the mystery of the

incarnation, viz., that the only way of showing your love of Him to be sincere was at once to quit all things for His sake. In His mercy, our Lord has acquainted the Church with a device by which the weak may escape from this trial which still challenges the devotion of the strong; and as if to show the world that this was true, our Lord put a seal of approbation on the devotion of St. Francis by making manifest the sincerity of his love in ways that filled all the world with astonishment. Sometimes the body was lifted like a leaf from the ground, to show that it was ready to be consumed by the fire of love—sometimes it lay powerless, and wasting like the ashes of a fire that has fled upward never to return—sometimes it threw out upon the world a heat so penetrating, so beneficial to those who became sensible of it, that he was afterwards designated ‘The Seraph of the Church,’ and his order ‘The Seraphical order.’ The members of this order are, or should be, men of similar tastes; *i. e.*, they should all have a fancy to honour the poverty of our Lord by embracing the portion of the poor man here.”

“But this is not real poverty.”

“It has this additional merit in it, viz., that it is hard to preserve. Besides, you were yourself just remarking on the plainness of their furniture.”

“Oh, this is an easy kind of poverty, I could practise this. In short, I quite enjoy it.”

“Why, pray?”

“I don’t know. Simply, I suppose, because I am sick of its opposite.”

“And why, may I ask, are you sick of its opposite?”

“I really cannot enter into particulars. I am just now in an odd state altogether. I am sick of *myself*. I feel as if I had been playing the pig.”

“Yet, in themselves, there is nothing detestable in riches. In heaven, of course, poverty is not known, whilst abundance reigns for ever. Neither do *all* people here, like you, nauseate riches, whilst many shun poverty and abhor poor people. All, therefore, depends upon the state of the soul. Riches here are only appreciable by the senses: they, therefore, who follow the law of the flesh love riches, whilst they who are striving to follow the law of the Gospel can scarcely understand in what the pleasure of possessing much consists, and

esteem as abundance what the rich regard as poverty. The more ardent lovers of our Lord, shrinking from the contemplation of their own merits, do everything in this kind in honour of what he did ; thus the poverty of the Franciscans, strictly speaking, is to be regarded as the form of their charity rather than a part of their penance ; and I admire them chiefly because they chose the rags of our Lord as the material of their habit rather than any appurtenance of his ; which was more expressive of what the Jews sought for *chiefly*—but, because they could not find it, would not have him for their king, but crucified him.”

“The spiritual discernment of St. Francis,” replied Sophia, “was quick. He saw at once what expressed the most admirable ingredient in the spirit of the Redeemer, though that was the very thing that scandalized the dull of heart.”

“Your love of poverty,” rejoined the padre, “though it seems to you a mere fancy, inclines me to regard you as one destined (if you will only have the humility to obey your destiny) to be very closely united to our Lord even here on earth.”

Sophia felt flattered, and had a difficulty, for the first time in her life, in replying at once in a manner calculated to conceal the fact that she was rather elated : it would have been easy to do this, could she have brought herself at that moment to regard the speaker as an impertinent and presumptuous person ; but he was by far too “deep” to have ventured upon such a speech before he was pretty certain it would not injure his own position. At last, however, she said,—

“My idea is, that it is entirely unconnected with religion, and cannot, therefore, be regarded as a sign of any particular propensity of the soul.”

The padre made no reply. They continued their repast in silence. When it was finished, the Cicerone took them to see the pictures he had before spoken of.

“Before you inspect them,” said the padre, “prepare your mind ; for they are too holy to be gazed on without any sort of reverence. They are like prayers, and the beholder should be prepared for prayer when he turns his eyes upon them. The first I shall take you to see represents the Seraph of the Church ; but with his face turned towards his fellow-creatures and not his God : and therefore make an act of humility before

you approach him, or you will not recognise the hour of your visitation."

They stood in the next minute before a picture representing St. Francis descending from Mount Alverno, like Moses from Mount Sinai, and exhorting a number of people "out of season." Sophia's eyes flew up to the countenance of the saint in a way that showed that the doors of her soul were open.

"No doubt," said she, dryly, after a long silence, and speaking from the deep seat of conviction, "we richly deserve his reproaches. I can hardly understand, indeed, how I can have the impudence to set up for a Christian when I am leading the life of a heathen."

"That," said the padre, "is the odd thing; and it was to open the eyes of the Christians of those days, who were living like heathens, that this 'more than a prophet' was sent to them."

"And what did they do?" said Sophia, carelessly.

"They did exactly what men did when St. John the Baptist began to preach. They did penance, and were baptized with the baptism of repentance."

"Of what did their penance consist?"

"St. Francis told them what they must do; and they wisely followed implicitly his directions."

They went on now to inspect other pictures, in each of which was evidence of the favour of Heaven, so that Lady Butwell and Sophia were both wonderfully edified; their happiness was deep, and it reached to the skies, and, what is more, it was permanent, so that they returned home renewed in spirit, and feeling strong and ready to consider seriously how they should spend the remainder of their lives.

On their return they found two letters directed to Sophia; one from the lady of a minister of state, the other from Emily Wortley. No lady of fashion in — was so skilled and successful in the art of swaying public opinion as she. Of this Sophia was well aware when she opened her note, which was in French, and ran as follows:—

"You are probably not aware, my dear young lady, that the etiquette of the court of — suffers by the continuance of your residence in this capital. Without presuming to

censure your motives for your sudden rejection of it so unceremoniously, after you had accepted the hand of one of his Majesty's ministers, I think it only a duty to let you know, my dear young lady, that that action of necessity reflects most offensively into the royal presence ; and that your recent presentation to the king, by depriving you of your *incognito*, imparts to your continued sojourn in — an appearance of indelicacy.

“ Believe me,” &c.

Having delivered this with a silent smile to her mother, Sophia now opened the letter from Emily Wortley. It began :—

“ MY DEAR CHILD,”—it then went on in a stream of condolence, which made it clear that the writer aspired to nothing more in this world than the firm establishment in the mind of her friend of the conviction that she would, if she could, bear the burden of all Sophia's sorrows a thousand times over. She wrote, too, as if she were writing for *many*, as if, as she wrote, she was rained upon by the tears of all Sophia's female friends, and was frequently interrupted by questions and suggestions from a posse of parsons, intermixed with, at least, half a dozen squires learned in Burns.

When we began the description of this letter, it was our sincere intention to speak of it very respectfully, and to leave the impression on the mind of our readers, that, to the sense of Sophia, nothing in the world could contrast more consolingly with the arrowy contents of the one just read than this warm-hearted, well-crossed missive from “Emily.” Our reason for not quoting it *in extenso* is simply that we really think the greater part of it may be easily imagined by our readers. One little bit, however, would probably not be thought to have place in it. This, therefore, we subjoin. After reviewing Sophia's narrative of the sad particulars of her father's death, Emily continued :—

“ As we all sit contemplating the scenes in which you have so unhappily been engaged as a principal actor, an irrepressible suspicion is aroused in every heart, which for the present we must rest content with expressing by the isolated question, ‘ What has become of the *guide*?’ ”

Sophia felt as if she had been suddenly roused from a deep sleep when her eye encountered these words: but she said nothing for the present, and read the letter to the end. A slight contraction of the brow was the only outward indication of the bound her soul had made almost simultaneously with her perusal of the words just quoted. When Lady Butwell came to the same passage, she merely said languidly, "What do they mean by that?"

Sophia inwardly smiled at the slowness of heart manifested by these words, but rejoiced the while, inasmuch as she feared the consequences of the horror which could have been engendered in her mother's mind by a participation in the widespread suspicion adverted to by the distant correspondent.

"This," thought Sophia gleefully, as she entered shortly afterwards her own room, and contemplated in imagination the expression of the faces of the group of personages that constituted the tribunal to which Emily had acted as reporter, "this is merry England all over!"

Soon afterwards the fair Rosamond was summoned.

"Desire Grapple," said her mistress, "to come to me in the drawing-room presently; I wish to speak to him." Her mother, she knew, was out of the way. As she spoke, she rose and descended. Had the reader seen her at that moment, he would have said that she looked like one endowed with a penetration that exceeded the bounds of the natural, and as if she had been born to be a minister of retributive justice, and was only really happy when she was fulfilling that vocation.

When Grapple entered the room, she was sitting on the sofa, looking, as he thought, wonderfully majestic.

"Now, Grapple," said she, fixing her pale-blue but most penetrating eyes upon the face of the groom, "relate to me, from beginning to end, all that happened to you from the hour of your departure on the day of my father's death to that of your return the following morning."

"Well, miss, I will, as near as I can," said Grapple, steadily returning her gaze. He then began as if he had never spoken on the subject before, and gave a most minute account of every particular connected with the ride which had ended so fatally to his master. He also narrated what had afterwards befallen him,—not omitting the conversation

he had had with Willibald just before he went to bed, which was interlarded, as usual, pretty profusely with the explicatives so indispensable to the sense of a reported dialogue,—“says I to him,” and “says he to me.”

Sophia did nothing but listen, and when the witness had completed his evidence, she dismissed, without cross-questioning him; so that he retired at a loss to imagine what her object could be in demanding a repetition of what he had so frequently had occasion to communicate before.

CHAPTER L.

IMMEDIATELY after giving Sophia Butwell the warning which had for the second time led to the dissolution of her matrimonial engagement, the generous deliverer had taken the precaution of changing the place of her abode. It was her pastor, on this occasion, to whom she was indebted for a hiding-place, which held good for upwards of two months. A secret chamber, the door of which was covered by a picture of the Crucifixion, formed one of the conveniences which the occupants of the presbytery had sometimes occasion for, and herein she spent her time securely, with the pastor's housekeeper for her attendant. She never left the room, and the housekeeper was most careful not to utter a word of her whereabouts to the most trustworthy of her acquaintances.

An hour, however, came at last, when the breath of suspicion made itself be felt by every inmate. The lion was at the door, and, having once found his way there, it became painfully evident to all that something attached him to the spot. The good housekeeper attributed his obstinacy to her guilty countenance. The pastor thought the devil was rendering assistance. But this idea only served to make him more determined than ever to preserve the life of his sheep. His inventive faculties were not long at work before a device was hit upon, which, we think, every reader will quickly admit was a sound one enough.

It happened that, at that time, among the merchant vessels

which lay in the harbour of —, there was one under the command of an Irishman, named Moriarty, who had made himself known to F. Volpicelli in the confessional. This individual was not what is called an "interior" man; but he was infinitely better than many "interior" men are: for they, as all the world knows, are frequently guilty of infidelities, visible only to the Searcher of Hearts, that are ten times more offensive in His sight than sins of a grosser kind resulting from the urgency of an unforeseen occasion, which are seen by all the world, and by all the world regarded as proof positive that he who commits them "is not a man according to God's own heart." Captain Moriarty was what is called a stanch Catholic. He kept his accounts with God in order. If he tripped, he confessed his sin at once, and got reconciled to his Redeemer as quickly as possible; but now he was never guilty of a worse sin than that of flying into a passion occasionally when something happened on his ship of a very provoking nature. In short, considering the nature of his calling, the confessor regarded him as a wonderful man, and secretly envied him the favour with which he thought he must be viewed, though unconsciously, by his Redeemer. Exteriously, however, there was nothing at all in the captain that denoted the temper of his spirit. He neither looked nor talked like a saint; neither did he, however, put on anything in his manners expressly for the purpose of concealing the state of the inward man. He was, in short, an admirable specimen of that sort of Christian which St. Paul contemplated when he said, "Let every man remain in that state in which he is called." He knew whenever he was *tempted* to commit a sin, and when he had committed one—he knew what was his condition as soon as he had sinned, and who the accredited agents of God were to whom he must go in order to be restored to the state of favour from which he had fallen;—he knew exactly the relation in which he stood to the Son of God, for he had learned that from his catechism when a boy, and that was enough for him. That busy majority of human beings who, having sucked in with their mothers' milk the lie which unites them to the world in the same way that baptism should unite their hearts to the Church, grow up in the delusion that filial piety demands a ready sympathy with the amiable weaknesses and the high-flown sentiments on religious matters of the daugh-

ter of Satan, Captain Moriarty looked upon them with about the same amount of respect that Dr. Busby of Westminster would have entertained for a crowd of children belonging to a preparatory school. He neither admired the well-behaved among them, nor hated the naughty ; but, reputing himself worse than the worst of them, he considered that his *knowing better* than they simply showed that it was his duty to pray for them ; but, viewing them in the light they wished to be viewed by him and everybody else, he heartily despised them, as if they came to steal from his heart a little of that incense which he made a point of reserving for God and his Church. His speech was smart and precise ; his countenance exhibited traces that spoke of severity, intermingled with lines denoting the frequent influence on his heart of the same forgivingness which had placed him in such a favourable position with the Author of all charity and goodness. He was intellectual-looking rather than affectionate, so that it was not easy at first to make out what manner of man he was—indeed, it might be said that his habitual contempt of self kept him constantly in an intellectual rather than affectionate state, and his language was always that of one who delighted to display his principles as the cause of all that he said or did of good, rather than any impulse of his own heart, which, therefore, men seldom saw, and in consequence thought him a cold, austere man, whereas he would have done a hundred times more in the service of a neighbour than many who are run after by “troops of friends” as warm-hearted, affectionate, and “dear” creatures.

He was rather tall, and very thin, with grey eyes and black hair. His features were small, and there was nothing about them bespeaking a fitness for sea-life ; hence his large black whiskers looked as if they did not really belong to him, but were artificial, and had been assumed to make him look fierce. But his courage was so high that he was able to enforce the strictest discipline without ever having recourse to coercive measures—in other words, every one of his crew entertained for him a profound respect. They looked upon as a “gentleman” every inch of him, though it needs scarcely be added that he was not what is properly understood in England by the word gentleman. He was married, and always took his wife to sea with him, until the family grew too numerous to

admit of this arrangement. At the present time she was with him. Of this the father was aware when he resolved to ask Captain Moriarty to allow his *protégée* to go on board his vessel. One Saturday afternoon, shortly after the skipper had been to confession, the padre called him into the sacristy, and, having closed the door, he thus began :—

“A young person belonging to this congregation has the misfortune to have become the object of the exceeding ill-will of a man of rank and influence, who, being a contemner of the laws of God, is the slave of his own vicious passions, and would not hesitate, if she were in his power, to procure by some means, calculated, however, to hide in the most effectual manner the originator of the wickedness, her death. She has been hiding from him now during the last eight years, and has been compelled frequently to change her place of abode in order to elude him. It happens just now that, having, by a proceeding prompted by charity rather than prudence, betrayed the continuance of her existence and of her power to injure him, the recollection of which is the secret of his animosity, she is in such imminent danger that I have thought it right to keep her locked up in a room in my house ; but even there she is not safe. Two or three times yesterday inquiries were made there, the object of which I soon saw through, though there was an attempt in each to delude us.”

“I shall consider myself highly favoured in being allowed to take charge of any one of your flock, father, and will be in readiness to take the young woman on board at any time you shall appoint.”

“May every blessing attend you for your charity ! My opinion is, that she should go this very night. But there are suspicious-looking persons hanging about, who seem determined that no one shall leave my door unseen.”

“Father, only state the hour, and leave all the rest to me. Nobody shall be looking about, I’ll promise you, whilst I remove her. She must only be ready to come the instant I call for her.”

“Well,” replied the other, confidently, “I’ll leave it all to you ; and now, my dear friend, I will detain you no longer. Good evening.”

CHAPTER LI.

EARLY in the morning following his interview with Sophia, Grapple, the groom, went forth as usual from the stable-yard to exercise the horses. Since his interview with Sophia, he had had some conversation with the maids. "I know"—Miss Rosamond Perrywinckle had said on that occasion, lowering her voice, and looking furtively round—"I know well enough what's in Miss Sophia's mind, as well as if she'd told me herself. It seems master was going to ask Mr. Willibald Cowley some questions about the prince [in a whisper]. He knows him well, and she thinks that this here guide was employed by him to make away with master by sending him headlong over the precipice."

Grapple was slowish in understanding the operations of the interior, and he had never yet dreamt that the guide could be anything beyond what he appeared to be, viz., a rather stupid sort of a guide. But no sooner had Rosamond uttered these words, than his brows became contracted, and suspicion seemed to be fully aroused in him.

"I should like well to fall in with that fellow again," said he; "and if I do, I'll be bound I don't let him go again till he's had a 'regular sifting.'"

"No, that you won't, I know," exclaimed Mrs. Barbara Botherall with an ironical grin. "But when obstinacy knows how to keep its place, there's no call to find fault with it."

It will be unnecessary here to record the continuation of this conversation. Let us follow now the groom as he rides, early in the morning, along the Mole at ——. It is Peter the Cruel again that he rides, leading Miss Butwell's Arabian, whose exquisite proportions form a contrast with the splendid English figure of the thoroughbred hunter, calculated to leave every unprejudiced admirer of horseflesh quite in doubt as to which to extol the most; for the hunter had none of the defects of the racer's form, nor was he *gaunt*, or in any respect ugly. What then constituted the difference between his beauties and those of the Arabian?—His were those of an athlete, a gladiator, an Achilles; the Arabian's were those of an Adonis. With some difficulty, the groom had succeeded

in getting quietly to the northern extremity of the town, and was a little way advanced beyond the houses along the beach, when he suddenly beheld two men in the following awkward and ludicrous predicament. Each sat on the ground, with his back to a post, and the hands of one were firmly united by a piece of tarred rope to the hands of the other: thus they sat back to back, with the post in the midst. If they endeavoured to rise, as they could never reach the perpendicular or balance themselves, it was but instantly to slip down again flat upon the rock in a sitting posture. "This is something like our stocks," said Grapple, pulling up and indulging in a laugh at the expense of the two malefactors, for such he took them to be. "Rare wicked uns these, I'll be bound," continued he, "or else they'd never have been here;" for he had often heard how lenient the law was in the ——— states. "I wouldn't trust my life with either of them if anybody'd had pay me a guinea a minute for all the time I was with him. Come, be still, can't you," exclaimed he to the impatient hunter. As he spoke, he rode a little nearer to the men, and after looking pryingly into the face of one of them for some minutes, he continued quietly, "It's him, and no mistake, and I won't take my eyes off him till I've got him snug, if I sit here all day before anybody comes to give the horses to." In the mean time, the Italians, looking like two denizens of the infernal regions who had had a thousand years of their present punishment, and were by all this suffering become only a thousand times more vicious and desperate, when they saw that the groom was not in the mind to set them at liberty, gnashed their teeth at him, and uttered imprecations of the most horrible nature; and could Grapple have understood what they said, he would soon have had his suspicions corroborated about the identity of one of them with the guide who had recently accompanied his late master and himself on their last ride. Nearly an hour had elapsed since he had first ridden up to this spot; but still he stuck to his ground, though his horses were becoming exceedingly restless. At last, to his great relief, he spied a gentleman on horseback trotting out of the town and coming towards him. "Now then, my lad," exclaimed he, "I'll show you directly what I'm stopping here for." The men also pricked up their ears at the sound of the approaching footsteps of the horse. But

as the stranger drew nearer, Grapple observed, with a considerable abatement of his contentment, that it was Prince Algorouki. "What does he do here at this time of the day?" thought the groom. The count seemed to be looking about him as if in search of somebody he expected to meet in that direction. At last his eye fell on the figure of the groom with his horses, and in the next minute he espied the two fellows who sat attached to the post.

"What the devil do you do here?" said he querulously to the men, but in Italian, as he drew near; and then, suddenly turning to Grapple, he continued in the tone in which the high and mighty speak to menials when they are angry:

"Why, my good fellow, didn't you set these two men at liberty? Don't you see that some mischievous villains have been playing them a trick?"

"Please sir," replied Grapple civilly, "there was nobody to hold this here horse, and he won't stand a moment if you leave him. Besides, one of these fellows is the guide that went with master and me when the accident took place."

The count did not appear to hear these words, but suddenly dismounting, and throwing his bridle to the groom, he drew out a knife, and had begun to cut the cord by which the men's hands were tied together, when Grapple exclaimed, "Please sir, you mustn't let this near fellow go; I've got a word to say to him, and——." Observing now that the count paid no attention to his representations, he jumped off his horse, and letting go the bridles, ran up to the post and seized the guide by the collar.

"Come," said the count haughtily, "this man has been tormented enough already. Let go, or I'll——"

"Lord love you!" cried Grapple fiercely, and still clinging to his man, "you are not the man, big as you are, that I'm to be frightened by."

Grapple was really bold as he seemed, but he little knew what manner of man he was speaking to at that moment. The prince now cut the guide's neckcloth, and threw Grapple on his back at the same time. But the latter reached for a stone, which he dashed up in such a way, that if the prince had not been as quick as lightning, his brains would have been knocked out. He had dropped his knife, or perhaps, now seeing what a malignant subject he had to deal with, he

would have smote his man with that. What he actually aimed at was to thrust his knee into his throat, and then beat his brains out with a stone. The two men, it will be observed, were not yet quite loosed, otherwise they would have assisted the count. The latter was steadily wrestling with the groom, and had got him once more on his back, when suddenly the conflict was interrupted in a way the most unlooked for. Peter the Cruel, though vicious and wilful, was an excessively sagacious horse, and of an adventurous disposition. Though at first, upon being released, he had begun to stray, the high words between his recent rider and the stranger had seemed to rouse his curiosity, and for a time he stood alternately smelling at the sea-weed, and looking up to see what the row was. The instant the conflict began, he erected his mane and trotted up to the scene of action. He arrived only just in time to be of service ; but he was not a moment too late. Seizing the count by the cheek, with his teeth he lifted him for a moment from his victim ; but the weight of the body exceeded the power of the flesh to keep its place, and, accordingly, it was presently torn from the bone, leaving the teeth and jaw exposed, and carrying with it the whole of the whisker and the adjoining portion of the scalp. This loss of his hold, together with the screams of the prince, only seemed to increase the ferocity of the horse, who, with an efficacy and cleverness which appeared to result from a feeling of almost human anger, now struck his victim down with his fore feet, and following up the advantage thus gained, he next stamped upon, and, in a frenzied manner, after sniffing at the disfigured mass before him, collected his hind and fore feet together, and allowed the whole weight of his carcass to complete the work of destruction by falling upon, the body of the enemy of Heaven.

Bewildered, and disqualified at the moment for action, by what he had seen, Grapple had by this time caught hold of the horse's bridle. As he did so, a terrible thought "gnawed his inwards." Could he have spoken it, he would have said, "This looks like retribution. Who caused the death of my master and his other horse?" It was with a species of awe that he now urged Peter the Cruel to rise ; but the first glance at the animal's eye assured him that the "Spirit of the Lord," which was Samson's strength, if it had in truth,

as he imagined, by the instrumentality of the horse, put this bloody end to the earthly career of the wicked prince, was now departed. The honest creature seemed to have forgotten the past already, and at once obeyed the groom, though with his usual air of independence.

One glance at the face of the prince sufficed to show him that he had gone to his account. Feeling that he was in an enemy's country, Grapple's first impulse now was "to bolt." But as his eye fell again on the hated features of the suspected guide, the feeling that he, Grapple, "was in the right, and had done nothing wrong," became so strong within him as to determine him at all hazard still to "stick to his man!" Whilst the latter and his companion, therefore, still unable to extricate themselves, conversed together, and wreaked their vengeance with eye and tongue on him, he firmly kept his ground for the next hour.

Fortunately for him, the first person to make his appearance at this juncture was the English consul, Mr. —, who was taking his customary morning walk. On being hailed by the groom, he approached the spot where he was to behold the mutilated remains of the famous Prince Algorouki.

"Dear me," said Mr. —, "how did this arise?"

Before Grapple could speak, the two men simultaneously charged him with having murdered the personage on whose battered head and features the eyes of the consul were fixed. Grapple, however, was not slow in telling his plain and unvarnished tale. And when he had finished it, the consul cast on him an encouraging glance whilst he said,—

"It may have occurred exactly as you state; but with these two witnesses against you, you will of course be tried for murder. I should recommend you now quickly to accompany me. I will give you into custody, and make known what has happened."

"I am much obliged to *you*, sir," replied the groom, touching his hat; "but I had *raather* not leave this spot till this here guide has been secured. I wouldn't have him get off—not for a good deal. It's my opinion, and it's the opinion of others, that he knew very well what he was about when he made the mistake that caused my master to ride over the cliff—and I knows nobody 'll rest at home till the thing has been examined into."

"Well, then," said the consul, "I'll wait here till some person comes by whom I can send for the police. That man will do, no doubt."

It was a lazzaroni of whom he spoke. He called him, and briefly explaining what had happened, requested him to proceed at once to the principal police-office. The man, however, lingered first to listen to the two fellows sitting back to back with the post between them. They also begged him to cut the rope by which they were secured, and he had drawn out his large knife to comply with their request, when the English consul interposed, and represented that the police must be present when they were released. The lazzaroni, sympathizing with his countrymen, who were fellows of very much the same breed as himself, still hesitated to leave them bound, and when they assured him that a party of English sailors had tied them there, and that the groom knew all about it, and that he and they—it was quite plain—had been engaged to assassinate the prince, he could no longer resist their representations, and was proceeding at once to release them, when Grapple again interposed.

"Please to hold the horse, sir," said he; and rushing on the man, he plucked the knife from his hand in an instant, and threw him on his back.

Fortunately, at this moment a company of soldiers, who were on their way to relieve guard, on hearing the imprecations of the lazzaroni, were induced to listen to the request from the consul that they would remain for a few minutes on the spot, watching the parties there assembled whilst he went in search of the police. He then hurried away. But whilst he was gone, several other lazzaroni came up, and so indignant were they at all they heard from their own companion and the other two men, that it was with the utmost difficulty the military succeeded in preventing a rescue before a body of police came up. The remains of the count were now stretched on a bier. Grapple was handcuffed, and the two witnesses were loosed, but not allowed to go away. They were compelled to accompany the others, whilst they marched, followed by an enormous concourse of people, through the streets of — to the Town Hall.

The story told by the two witnesses to the lazzaroni was now in everybody's mouth, and the whole town was satisfied

of the guilt of Grapple and his employers before they had heard his story. This, in the mean time, was faithfully reported by his interpreter the consul ; but as no explanation was advanced by him to account for the condition in which the guide and his companion had been found, nor for the apparent co-operation of the body of English sailors, which had thrown their victim, the prince, into his power—nothing could be reported to the people, after his defence had been made, which was not rather calculated to intensify their certainty of his guilt, and, as a consequence, the feeling of detestation which had already begun to spread among them towards Lady Butwell and her daughter.

The witnesses really thought at the time that they were the victims of a counter-plot, and partly believed, as they represented to the magistrate, that a party of English sailors had been employed by somebody to murder Prince Algorouki—that they had been waiting for an opportunity for some days past—and that, having at last contrived that he should be in the Via ——— on such a night to take into custody a woman who had been recently, for a second time, the cause of a rupture between himself and the lady to whom he was engaged to be married, whom, therefore, they knew could be used as a bait, and expecting that he would be accompanied by others, these sailors had come there as if accidentally, and feigning a state of intoxication, had carried off and bound them, that another party might, uninterruptedly and unwittingly, assassinate the count—that Grapple was one of this gang, and that he had come out on the morning of the prince's death in the belief that that nobleman, who, it was pretended, had defeated the plans of the murderers in the night, would be early on foot to ascertain what had happened to his followers, and that, whilst engaged in cutting the thick cords with which they were bound, he had suddenly dismounted, and with a large stone struck the count a stunning blow on the head, which he repeated frequently after his victim had fallen at his feet in a state of insensibility.

There was scarcely a creature in ——— who did not believe this statement when it was reported about, excepting the few who knew it was not true. Such was the impatience of the lazzaroni, who were the first to hear and the readiest to give full credit to it, that they rushed tumultuously to the hotel in

which Lady and Sophia Butwell resided. All the gay world at — were familiar with the physiognomy of Sophia. Up to this time most had admired the eye, the features, the complexion, and the sneer of the lady engaged to be married to the prince ; but now everybody recollected the expression of that face only to recognize in it another witness to the atrocity with which she was charged at this moment. Cold-blooded, vindictive monster !—devil in human form !—these appellations were in everybody's mouth. The magistrate himself was convinced of her guilt, and soon the court was made to believe in it, and the king sent down to say that she and her mother ought to be secured at once, as it was clear there would be an attempt to rescue them in the night by the sailors they had employed, if they were not arrested before that time. Orders at the same time were sent to the commanders of two or three vessels in the preventive service to be on the look-out, and, if possible, to ascertain the name, and to put a guard on board the vessel which had furnished the hands who had lately been engaged in the infamous conspiracy which had just been brought to light.

CHAPTER LII.

To return now to the Butwells—

It was when the excitement had become general, and some time after the prolonged absence of the groom had occasioned no little surprise among his fellow-servants, that Sophia Butwell, who was sitting alone in the drawing-room, conjecturing what would be his reply to a note she had just despatched to Father Volpicelli, communicating her suspicions relative to the nature of her father's death, and requesting his assistance, received the first intimation of the state of the public mind with reference to herself from the fracture of a pane of glass in the room in which she sat, by a large stone that struck the wall on the opposite side. At the same time the shouting of many persons without caused her to say, as if rather disgusted at a sound so little savouring of anything amiable,—

“What can all this hubbub be about?”

At the same time she rose, and, going to the window, gazed scornfully from it upon the crowd of lazzaroni, who shook their fists at her, and applied names to her which shall not be honoured with the support of our ink. Very much surprised at what she observed, but not at all frightened, she now rang her bell. Rosamond entered breathless and pale,—

"I don't know what they mean," said she; "but both me and Barbara is convinced all these savage fellows are come here to do us some injury."

Sophia continued to work, whilst, with a marvellous appearance of indifference, she replied,—

"Oh, it's something or other that has been got up by that man."

Lady Butwell entered the room at this moment,—

"What can all this mean?" said she. "Something dreadful is going to happen, I am sure. I hope the door is secured. I hope the landlord will protect us."

Barbara now rushed in,—

"Oh, my lady," said she, "I never could have thought it, but it's in everybody's mouth, that Robert has murdered Prince Algorouki; and, my lady, they're all saying we're all concerned in it, and I expect every moment the police-officers will be here to take us all to prison."

At this Sophia indulged in a saucy, contemptuous laugh, which scandalized Mrs. Barbara so much that she ventured on a reply:—

"Well, miss, it may seem to you very little indeed. You may be glad as the prince has gone to his account; but I never thought I should have lived to see the day when I should be accused of the guilt of shedding man's blood."

A shower of stones now came through the windows.

"We had better get into a back room," said Sophia. "I suppose we shall have a full and particular account of the whole business in the course of the day; in the mean time let us all hold our tongues and look as guilty as we can. Before we go, I will just show my face once more at the window, that you may see what a funny effect it has."

With this the lady went to the window. Execrations and curses greeted the ears of those within, when Sophia turned her head quickly, with a smile, to contemplate the effect of such sounds on the home audience.

"This is not a time," said Lady Butwell, "for indulging in a humour so far removed from the thoughtful, self-examining state which befits the hour of adversity and trial. We ought rather to be praying."

"I couldn't pray about such a thing as this," replied the daughter, gaily. "I shouldn't know what to say or how to begin. To me it seems as if these stupid people ought to be left to flounder through their blunder without any help from heaven or earth."

"But, surely, for your mother?"

"Oh, depend upon it, the storm will soon pass from our roof."

Just as they were leaving the room, they were met by the butler, accompanied by three officers of justice. One of these explained the object of their visit.

"You are accused," said he, "of having employed a party of English sailors and your own servant to assassinate Count Algorouki, and at present the evidence against you is so strong that I have been sent to arrest you. But as the danger arising from the indignation of the people is very urgent, it has been determined that you shall be confined here, at least until to-morrow."

Lady Butwell and the two maids now began "to cry." They took out their handkerchiefs and sobbed aloud. Sophia simply replied to the officer,—

"This is quite ———. Whilst you talk of protecting us, the rabble takes the law into its own hands, and strives to stone us to death long before we have been pronounced guilty by the judge. See here," continued she, pointing to the broken windows, "we can't remain in this room any longer."

"My orders are to confine you here," replied the officer.

"Surely another room will do as well?" continued Sophia, in a tone of expostulation—at the same moment a stone of moderate dimensions came through the window and struck the officer on the forehead. "You see," continued she, quietly, "what we are exposed to here. Had that been my head instead of yours, it would have been broken, I am sure."

The officer looked perplexed, but in the next minute wrath appeared in his looks and gestures!

"It is a just punishment for staying and talking with such people as you. You will stay here. Come," he continued

to his companions, "let us put on the bolt at once, and be off."

The door was now closed and secured. Sophia, in consequence, began to consider what was best to be done in order to escape injury from the stones. The green blinds opened without, and in order to close them it was necessary to go out on the balcony. Great danger of being struck was to be apprehended from such an exposure; she nevertheless did not hesitate a moment to venture. The instant she appeared, a hideous yell and cries of detestation, from numerous females who had now joined the crowd, greeted her, whilst again a shower of stones were aimed at her. In the midst of these, none of which took effect, she turned once more and looked very quietly but very scornfully at the crowd, and then closing the blinds without any appearance of hurry, withdrew from their sight. The rage of the populace now became so ungovernable that they wished to pull the house down, and began to execute their threats. The landlord now demanded protection from the mayor; but it was not until his house had been seriously damaged that a body of soldiers were sent down to protect it from further injury. Lady Butwell was now on her knees. The two maids continued to sob; whilst Sophia still continued, as she said, "to enjoy it."

"Long before this day's sun declines," said she at one time, "our innocence will shine out so brightly that the people will not see when night comes on, so that it will, as it were, renew the day."

"Your levity and presumption are alone sufficient," replied Lady Butwell, "to draw upon us all the wrath of Heaven, and they, no doubt, are the cause of this terrible trial."

"Why, don't you know yourself how complete our innocence is? Well, then, the instant this is seen, it will seem all the brighter that it has been, up to that time, suffering from so dense an obscuratation."

"I shall rather expect that our heads will be off," replied the mother, pettishly.

CHAPTER LIII.

THIS was the state of things without, when Padre Volpicelli began to walk up and down his neat parlour—looking, as usual, cool enough, but somewhat perplexed withal. Sometimes he stopped short and looked at a picture, rubbing off dirt or dusting the frame, as if he had nothing else just then to do or to think about ; at last, however, he sat down, took up a pen, mended it, got a sheet of paper before him, and commenced writing. His letter was rather long. The reader shall have a sight of an English version of it in another place. We shall only add here, that when finished, it was directed and despatched to the magistrate recently spoken of ; that shortly after this there appeared on each side of the gate of the palazzo in which the Butwells lived a sentinel, who desired everybody who stopped to ask questions to move on ; and that before the end of the day another account of the origin of the recent assassination got into circulation, exculpating the Butwells and fixing the guilt wholly and entirely on the prince himself. The source of the second story stood revealed to the astonished public on the following morning in a copy of the letter that the reader has just seen written, which appeared in the daily paper, and in the largest type, under the heading,

*“ The Murder of COUNT ALGOROUKI.—Important Disclosure
by his REVERENCE PADRE VOLPICELLI.*

“ MY VERY DEAR AND ILLUSTRIOUS FRIEND,—

“ You will not suppose me actuated by any undue sympathy with the heretics when I make known to you the following facts, which amount, according to my estimation, to conclusive evidence that they are not chargeable with the guilt so confidently imputed to them by the public at this moment. I shall begin my revelations with pleading guilty myself to the employment of the English sailors.

“ For some years past the life of one of my congregation, who shall speak for herself at a fitting time and in the proper place, has been constantly in danger from the animosity of

the late Prince Algorouki. She it was, it is true, who gave the information to the English lady which determined her not to marry him,—but she did so from the best of motives and by my advice. The groom, I think you will find, had cause to desire to capture the man who had acted as guide when his master rode into the precipice, though he was in no way connected with my party. They were employed by me to assist in the removal of the young woman just spoken of to a vessel in the harbour, or rather, the captain of the vessel, a good Catholic, whom I knew well, employed them to remove from the vicinity of the house in which she resided two braves, posted there to ascertain, by continued watching, whether she was within, and, that their proceeding might appear to be the result of chance, he desired them, when engaged in it, to pretend to be intoxicated. Meanwhile, the female was removed by himself. She went with him on board his vessel, and has remained there ever since.”

As soon as the writer of this letter became aware that the suggested *amende* had been energetically adopted by the magistrate to whom it was addressed, he ventured to approach in person the Butwells' residence. On entering the drawing-room, he at first said nothing; but, looking first at Lady Butwell and then at Sophia, he gave them both to understand that he did not know how to address them. “Mamma,” said Sophia, “excuse me; I wish to speak for a few minutes with Father Volpicelli alone. We will go into the next room.” Without waiting for a reply, she rose, and requested Father Volpicelli to accompany her. The door being closed, she turned and said—

“I dare not yet allow my mother to know that I have the suspicions to which I alluded, yesterday, in my note to you.”

“Then,” replied the pastor, “I am afraid she must have been terribly alarmed during the late siege. I am come to express the regret it occasioned me to find that I, though unwittingly, was the remote cause of the succession of events which were brought to a comparatively happy issue yesterday evening. I will make a point now, of communicating to the king the grounds there are for the suspicions you entertain, because I myself feel convinced they are very just, and because an inquiry is, in my opinion, due, if it were only for

the sake of demonstrating that the judgments were not rash which emboldened one to warn, and you, in consequence, to shrink from the consummation of your contemplated union with the Prince Algorouki."

"Thank you," replied Sophia; "I am too selfish a being to be able to refuse the offer of such services. Shall we return now to my mother?"

Before he took his departure, the ladies had drawn from their visitor a good number of interesting particulars relative to the adventures of their mysterious friend, whose rescue had caused, at the same time, the overthrow of their mutual enemy.

"You will, I hope, know more of her by-and-by," said he, as he took his leave.

CHAPTER LIV.

THOSE among the warm-hearted inhabitants of the city of — who had made the most vehement demonstrations of their resentment, under the impression that the popular Prince Algorouki had fallen by hands in the pay of the Butwells, began now to think of Sophia with a kind of respect as a favourite of Providence, and all devout persons throughout the city and neighbourhood remembered her in their prayers, and ardently besought her divine Deliverer that He would now remove her still farther from the reach of her enemies; that He would "lead her into the wilderness and speak to her heart." There was no religious community in or near —, to the members of which her story had not been made known; but that in which Cecilia Bianconi had been professed was, by the instrumentality of this sister, who remembered Sophia well, brought to view her position with an interest of the most lively kind. Marriage, without vocation, is nothing but a visible representation of the bondage of a soul which is in the devil's power. It seems constantly to present itself under this aspect to nuns; many, at least, manifest a difficulty in realizing the fact, that where

this kind of union has been blessed in all its parts, a relative perfection is attainable in this state, as well as in that higher one to which they have been called. It is not easy to appreciate, by a mere representation in words, the feeling of half-mischievous exultation which women, dedicated in this way to the exclusive and virginal service of God, experience, on hearing from the lips of one about to join their ranks, the particulars of an escape similar in some small degree to that of Sophia Butwell. They do not appear any longer to recognize the existence of passion, much less to admit it as an excuse in one of their sex for lamenting a disappointment; they simply *congratulate* the soul on its fortunate escape, when so near being shut up in the prison of a second body; and rejoice at this, as the angels do at the repentance of one who has been drawn from an impending committal to the servitude of sin. This joy and exultation may be a gift adapted to the exigencies of their state, as being calculated to endear it to them, and to make them pray heartily that many may yet be participators therein. Sophia, as a Protestant, was fortunate in being spiritually known, at this time, to so many of the most privileged of her sex, whose existence she knew nothing of; for, however dull herself, and slow of heart, it was impossible that such generous and ardent entreaties in her behalf could be made in vain to their heavenly Spouse. If at this moment an abyss yawned between where Sophia was and where they were, their feelings for her formed a bridge, by which their Spouse could go and visit her if he would. And this bridge remained from day to night, and it continued long soliciting.

CHAPTER LV.

WHAT Father Volpicelli thought ought to be done, he soon after found was already being done by Providence. The king, he found, perceiving that there was already before the public more than enough to justify the notion that the Prince Algorouki was wholly unworthy of the distinguished marks of the royal favour he had latterly enjoyed, was now desirous of letting his subjects see how much *all* had been deceived; for he did not forget what *they* were inclined to overlook, viz., that the brigand had been pardoned by *acclamation* as soon as his past career was gilded by the rays of his newly-recovered rank.

To effect this, orders were issued for instituting, by the means of as many witnesses as could be procured for that end, a searching inquiry into the particulars of the deceased's career as an "amateur" robber, and of his "hidden life" since.

One fact only connected with this investigation has to be made known to the reader of this narrative. The prisoner Cajone was the only person who seemed willing or able to give evidence. But when it became evident that he was induced to make these revelations by the hope of pardon for his complicity in the guilt of the crime which had been prevented by Father Volpicelli, his evidence was of course received with due caution. In pursuing this course he inadvertently betrayed a companion, whose crimes, requiring that he should be apprehended and tried, were found, by his own revengeful confession, to embrace one, which, to the amazement of the whole court, consisted of his having been accessory before the fact to the murder of Sir Francis Butwell, by Cajone himself, who acted on that occasion—so went the account—as the agent of Prince Algorouki. It was averred that he had been commissioned by the prince, the evening before, to repair to the village of —, so as to be in readiness to offer his services in the capacity of guide on the arrival of Sir Francis, that, by giving him a wrong direction, he might occasion the fatal turn towards the precipice. This

locality, he said, was familiar to Algorouki, and chosen by him as most happily suited to his murderous design.

A waiter belonging to the hotel at which the Butwells were staying before they entered the palazzo—their horses had not been removed—supplied the most important fact of all, when he stated that the prisoner, late on the evening of the day on which Sir Francis Butwell had met with his death, had inquired of him whether there was any one in the hotel who would be wanting a guide the following day, and that he, the waiter, had mentioned that he believed Sir Francis Butwell was going the next morning to —, but that he would not employ a guide. In addition to this it was ascertained that he had arrived late the same night at —, where he was known to the landlord of the *osteria*, as a former follower of Carmen Festa; that he had not said why he had come there, but that he appeared to be awaiting the arrival of somebody previous to the appearance of Sir Francis Butwell, and that the instant this occurred, his proceeding had so much the appearance of having been preconcerted, that all present after his departure in company with “milor” remarked on the fact. The prisoner’s assertion that he was not familiar with the road was proved to be untrue by the statement of this landlord.

Other facts gradually came to light, which completed the chain of circumstantial evidence, convicting Cajone of wilful murder, who then, in the hope of improving his own case, divulged the fact that he had been employed by the Prince Algorouki.

It would be beside our purpose to detail what was said and thought at court when this discovery was made. It will suffice to state that in a general way people felt ashamed of themselves, and that by common consent it was judged most expedient, under the circumstances, to behave very generously towards Lady and Sophia Butwell.

The king set the example. Lord Slothorpe also called, and condescended to wear the air of a person overwhelmed with confusion so as to be afraid even to utter the word pardon! On entering the room, the first thing he did was to cover his face with a handkerchief. The rest may be imagined.

CHAPTER LVI.

It was now that Sophia first got a clear view of the insignificance, as she had previously acquired an insight into the base stolidity, of the spirit which orders the thoughts of the majority of the acting members of the so-called *gay world*. The king, whom she still respected as a *man*, appeared to her now no more than a king in the "Arabian Nights;" and the men and women, with Lord Slothorpe at their head, whom a short time previously she had acknowledged as a considerable *power*, now remained objects of interest only because they had become unreal, in her estimation, as the personages in whom is vested the administrative of the interest of an Eastern tale.

An elevation of spirits was the result of this discovery, as if she had begun to breathe pure air. It was a feeling similar in kind to that which Willibald had experienced the day after the commencement of his journey in search of the convent in the Abruzzi, and to that which succeeded the indignation aroused in the breast of Sir Francis by the insolence of those he had disappointed by voting for Catholic Emancipation. Her own description of the feeling would have been that she was sensible of an extraordinary energy in the midst of her heart, accompanied by a desire to do something tremendous, but in the opposite direction of the usual leaning of such desires. All that her mother could see of the state of her interior was expressed by a kindness of manner and a playful considerateness which in times past had seldom or never been manifested by this lady. It did not fail to cheer the widowed mother considerably, she being one of those who could never be affected in this manner but by the active kindness of others. Since her marriage, Sir Francis had been the unfailing and sole cause of her many and frequent interior jubilations, and she had not once felt anything like a recurrence of such feelings till Sophia commenced, as if by an incontrollable instinct, to aim, by all sorts of speeches and propositions, to cheer her.

"Now, *mutter*," said she, as they sat together one day, "decide, what are we to do? To winter here, or return at once to England?"

"I leave it entirely to you to choose now."

"Well, then, for all sorts of reasons, I am in favour of wintering here. Preston would be insufferably dull just now. Besides,

"In the *desert* a fountain is springing;
In the *wild wood* there still is a tree,
And a bird in the *wilderness* singing;"

but *there*, what is there that would speak to our spirits of *him*? If we were in England now, I should be longing to pay a visit to his grave. In short, I somehow feel—I suppose his poor remains must be the loadstone—more attached to this soil than ever. It is not the people, God knows, but their heaven, the clime, whence comes the arrow which has pinned my heart to Italy, and cut in twain every other local attachment."

"It is a pity," replied her mother, "that we know no nice people here. Lord Slothorpe is evidently as tired of us as we are of him."

"I have strong hopes, d'you know, that, sooner or later, we shall have the Cowleys here again. Wouldn't it be delightful if they were again living at the Villa Algorouki? I should be for asking them to let us live with them."

"What will become of it now?" replied Lady Butwell.

"Of course it escheats to the crown. Dear me! Don't you think we could get the king to grant it to Captain Cowley?"

"I am sure the application would give offence," replied the mother.

"I shouldn't mind that, if it proved successful. And now I think of it," continued Sophia eagerly, "what is there in the world papa would rather see us attempting now than the bringing about of such a consummation? Don't you remember that it was for the Cowleys' sakes he left England, though all this went out of our heads after we fell in with Lord Slothorpe."

"But what could be said?" asked the mother.

"Oh, we'd concoct a letter between us; or, perhaps, after all, it would be wiser to beg an audience, and petition in person."

We have said before, that from the king to the most insignificant member of the court a feeling of Sophia's superiority, in point of penetration and moral integrity, gave rise to a

desire to conciliate her, as if her return to her native land with an unfavourable impression of the respectability of the court of — were considered likely, by indirect means, to prejudice its credit at St. James's. On her side Sophia felt the power these impressions gave her, without being able or wishful to trace it to its true source. Her mother did not give her credit for having risen to such a commanding altitude in the opinion of people, and therefore looked upon the proposed application as the shadow of another approaching disappointment.

"I will tell the whole story," pleaded Sophia with animation, "from beginning to end, and, depend upon it, the favour will be granted."

"At least consult Father Volpicelli beforehand," suggested the mother.

"That can be done. We will call upon him to-day."

They called; and in reply to her question, preceded by a comprehensive sketch of the present relations in which the Cowleys and the Butwells stood to each other, Father Volpicelli replied:—

"If the merit of originating the application be left undiminished with you, you will not be disposed to quarrel with me for suggesting that the mode of making it should differ from that you have just proposed, to the extent of excluding almost all appearance of your participation in it. To effect a thing of this kind time is required. I do not think success would justify the means, if you were this minute to go in person and ask this favour of the king, because, if he were to grant it, it would not be in view of the moral justice of the claim you would be advocating, but chiefly in consideration of the importunity of one he would not fancy, just at this present moment, disobliging. If you will leave the matter to me, I will take care that the king shall be, as if by accident, made acquainted with Sir Francis's motive for coming to — this second time. This will set him thinking himself about the Cowleys, and perhaps be the occasion in him of the merit of restoring, entirely of his own accord, their forfeited purchase to that amiable family."

Humility, as the reader will have observed, was not among the virtues of which Sophia possessed any theoretical knowledge, or which she consciously cultivated; but her soul pos-

sessed at least an instinctive fancy for an occasional act of it. She seemed to be reading in the very depths of his interior the lesson in it the good Father Volpicelli was apparently unconsciously giving her as he uttered the words just recorded: and it was almost from himself she took the power of replying in conformity with its dictates on the present occasion.

"I should be most obliged, and I fully appreciate your motive for making the king an unconscious instrument."

This answer agreeably surprised Lady Butwell, and she returned charmed with the mild wisdom displayed in the advice which Sophia had just engaged herself to follow. Indeed, it was this answer which gave rise to the series of meditations that eventuated in her submission to the Catholic Church. It was by the voice of Father Volpicelli on this occasion that her Lord caused himself to be recognized by his sheep as the sender of the pastor. From this time, too, she began to entertain hopes that Sophia would one day or other change very considerably for the better. Though so few are disposed to yield a practical assent to the truth of the precept, that humility is the foundation of all virtue, everybody hails, as a certain forerunner of progress in others, the signs of diffidence and docility.

Her favourite occupation now was reading controversial books for and against the Catholic religion, though faith had begun to enter her soul by another channel. Father Volpicelli had gradually become an intimate friend; for they had found in him a depth of naturalness which heretofore they had discovered in no other creature: so that Sophia was obliged to confess to herself that she knew not so well her own heart as she understood that of this Italian priest. His soul was, therefore, quite their resting-place at present—a garden inclosed for them, when else they would have found the pressure of the crowd insupportable. All the good father's weaknesses they saw as plainly as his virtues, without ever feeling inclined to regard them as weeds, or anything else than flowers without a scent.

They frequently visited him, and enjoyed a thousand times more than a morning at Pompeii looking over his books, pictures, prints, relics, curiosities, vestments, altar-plate, music, &c., the sight of which usually induced a pleasing sense of

the penetratingly *objective* nature of the *very* truth which, whilst it condemns excesses and caprice, never leaves us to faint on the way for the want of something to look at, to handle, to hear, to smell, to study, to write upon, and to cling to. Indeed, the use of the senses is never enjoyed in the way in which our first parents enjoyed them without the pale of the Catholic Church, because it is here alone that their use often assumes the character of a spiritual exercise. No words can describe the intensity and charming peculiarity of the pleasure the mother and daughter found in entering, by a long passage from the presbytery, the sacristy of the parish church, of which he was at present the curé. Those who have been long familiar with such regions, still, when there, sigh for advancement to others far better. To them a sacristy, though a holy place, has still a chilling, uninviting air, like the garden of Gethsemane, whose only claim to a fond regard arises from the deplorable circumstance of its having been the scene of our Lord's agony and betrayal; but Lady Butwell and Sophia felt as if they were beginning a new life of a better kind here. The mere smell of the place "lifted up their hearts," which was shown exteriorly only by the extraordinary curiosity with which they went prying about like cats in a newly-opened lumber-room. The quiet glow of the heart which is experienced by most converts when first our Lord (not the less certainly because invisibly) breathes upon them, and says, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," is accompanied by a gleam of the eye which renders their joy "catching" to the beholder. The pastor's housekeeper was constantly running against the "Inglesi," that she might have the happiness of witnessing *their* happiness. The look of internal contentment with which this humble creature gazed on Sophia's expressive face, whence the shades of night were now being slowly chased away by the rising sun of charity, reached a degree that might almost be called ecstatic. Sophia, in a different way, was equally taken with the housekeeper, who eventually became of use to them as a friend of all devout souls leading comparatively hidden lives in the city of ——. It was first through this door that Sophia began to get a sight of the Christian world in ——.



CHAPTER LVII.

A MONTH, profitably and agreeably spent, had elapsed since Sophia communicated to Father Volpicelli her notion that she should make an application in person to the king. She was amusing herself at the piano ; her mother was reading White's "Refutation of Church-of-Englandism ;" when Father Volpicelli was announced. "You have behaved very well," said he to Sophia presently, "in not saying a word during the whole of the last month indicative of impatience, and therefore it may be regarded as a reward that the time of doubt is expired so soon. I saw the bishop to-day. He told me he had recently had an interview with the king, in company with the Bishop of — and the guardian of the convent in which our friend Cowley lives. The king, it appears, had summoned them to hold a consultation with him. He began by desiring to be informed whether it was the opinion of our own bishop, who knew the Cowleys when they resided at the Villa Algorouki, that they were truly good Catholics. The bishop assured me he felt himself bound to communicate everything he could think of to enable the king to conceive the same high opinion that he entertained of them ; and that at once guessing the object of his inquiry, he took occasion to insinuate that the influence of the Church in a given neighbourhood was sensibly affected by the presence of only one family in the enjoyment, like that of Lazarus and his sisters, of the privilege of serving as a reservoir of Divine love : at which words, he said, the king literally started. Convents were useful in another way. In them reparation is made, but in pious opulent families the Lord is found as it were in another humour—munificent, and so forgiving as to seem forgetting. Here often we can converse with him, when in a convent he appears reserved and difficult to please.

"The king then went on to question the guardian ; who, it seems, for a reason you would hardly be able to appreciate, reported with a reluctance which only served to increase the interest his account of the life, habits, and virtues of his treasured subject inspired. In fact, before he had finished what he had to say, his majesty interrupted him. He said

he saw clearly that he could not do better than grant the estate of Algorouki to Captain Cowley and his heirs for ever, playfully putting it to the bishops whether it was not their opinion that he deserved it in every way by congruity."

Lady Butwell wept as her thoughts were directed by the words of Father Volpicelli to the retreat of Captain Cowley, and she saw him, in imagination, receiving the letter conveying the joyful news that he was again to see his son, and to convey back his wife to the scene of her past happiness, and, perhaps, to witness there that effect upon her mind which he and Sir Francis Butwell had hoped would be the consequence of the recovery of her son.

Sophia did not care to reveal by any outward sign what a fiery delight was enkindled within her heart by the joyful news just communicated. She did not, however, succeed in deceiving Father Volpicelli, who, looking at her with an expression she did not understand, said,—

"Well, are you satisfied with the way in which your design has been executed?"

Sophia replied, "Oh, perfectly."

"Is there anything else I can do for you, or will you communicate the good news yourself to Brother—to Willibald and his parents?"

Sophia's heart grew terribly unruly at this moment. She longed to do what she saw Father Volpicelli thought had better be done by himself, but by an heroic effort she presently relinquished her hold of the fruitful and fascinating occasion.

"I think it would be much better if you were to tell Mr. Willibald Cowley, without alluding to us at all; as, ostensibly, we really had no share in the guidance of the king's thoughts to this happy issue."

"Well," replied Father Volpicelli, "I will lose no time in complying with your wishes. I will go to the convent this very afternoon."

Shortly after this the padre left them. Sophia was now getting a taste of that bitter but wholesome medicine which spiritual physicians designate interior mortification. Her perverse heart had never till now owned to any serious concern on account of the vow which had placed the heart of Willibald Cowley as distant as the moon from the sphere of the influence of her sexual charms; but now, as if indignant at

the restraint she had found it necessary to put upon it, it chose to feel as if it would burst with love.

Whilst this conflict was raging within, she resumed her seat at the pianoforte, and began to play a long and extremely difficult piece of music, which here and there accorded with her highest ideas of the duties of "heavenly harmony." It would have made the composer happy could he have heard her then ; so delicately, so correctly, so penetratingly, and so vehemently did she strike the instrument in realization of his ideas. This was the channel by which the excitement caused by the struggle just adverted to made its slow and difficult escape. At last she turned round, and gazed on her mother with a look so brilliantly joyful as almost to deserve the appellation of heavenly. Lady Butwell slowly raised her head from her book, contemplated her for a minute with an appearance of satisfaction, and then silently resumed her reading.

The thoughts which had given rise to this sudden change in the expression of Sophia's countenance shall be disclosed on another occasion.

CHAPTER LVIII.

Letter from SOPHIA BUTWELL to EMILY WORTLEY.

"DEAR EMILY,—Since the dreadful events I had to tell you of in my last, my mother has remained in a frame of mind sufficiently difficult to describe, though it seems to me to bear a strong resemblance to my own during the same period. Both of our souls seem to be in a paralyzed condition, and so, by the by, do those of Barbara, Rosamond, and Robert. Thus, even now, I can hardly give a definite reply to your question,—Shall we return to England this autumn? At present I take no cognizance of localities. I have just been inspecting that part of my head which is said to cover the organ of veneration. This, in times past, as you remember, presented a most unpromising aspect. I fully expected just now to find a vast alteration for the better ; but the shape

remains as Grecian as ever, and there is no more change than there would have been had my head been made of marble. My sentiments, however, are decidedly improving. I frequently have long and most comprehensive meditations. They mostly run upon self, it is true; but they are not altogether disconnected with religion. My most frequent one is upon my own liability to be deceived—*egregiously deceived*. Considering the high opinion I ever had of my own judgment, resulting from the frequent appeals to it, and the deference with which, from an early age, it has been honoured by my parents, yourself, and others, numerous enough, as you know, this seems to me to be remarkable enough; indeed, *so* remarkable is it, that, as I just said, I have been puzzling over it constantly for the last month. The question I am constantly asking is this,—To what end is this judgment given us, if in all the most important occurrences with which we are connected during life, its discriminations prove delusive? You may remember how frequently, before we left England the first time, I astonished you by pointing out unsuspected defects in the character of persons who appeared to you particularly free from these very defects, and how eventually these defects became equally obvious to you, and reflected most advantageously on the judgment which had prompted the line of conduct I had pursued towards them; and yet how stupendously was I deceived in my ideas about the monster with whom I was lately on the verge of being converted into ‘one flesh.’ It is true I was right in my decision about his birth, and, no doubt, it was this morsel of genuineness in him which enabled him to conceal the villany of which all the rest was composed. You will reply to this,—But you were equally quick in giving ear, on the first occasion, to the warning voice, which also subsequently you listened to, and were saved. And *I* rejoin,—This is precisely the difficulty; for herein I proved I *had* judgment; but in that, after the first warning, I could be again so fearfully deceived by the representations of the very man this judgment had led me to condemn, I showed that my judgment was of no use to me. I am now going to present you with a solution of this difficulty. Each one is endowed with a certain amount of judgment, but no one with sufficient for the wisdom of the imagination, when this faculty has been made the vehicle of a representation that

proves extremely attractive to the soul. Man is gregarious as a *rational being*, just as much as he is as an *animal*. Think over this proposition a minute or two, and you will see at once that it is correct. My father, though so determined an upholder of the all-sufficiency of every man's judgment for his own guidance, was constantly asking my advice, and was eventually punished for his inconsistency by being wofully misled by me : for, not being myself guided, this was a case of the blind leading the blind. But, you will reply,—what a difficulty do you provide for every one by advocating this principle. *All must have advisers, yet all are liable to be misled by their advisers unless these are themselves advised.* I have thought over this difficulty, and what is the upshot of my cogitations ? Even this, that the confused state of human society throughout the world, and in every condition and sphere of life, all arises from the universality of the practice of the blind leading the blind. It was once a favourite theory of mine that something like one-third of the world are *seers*, and the rest—embracing often individuals of greater talent and genius than the seers—consultors. I had not the slightest doubt at that time that *I* was a seer, because, whilst I myself never wished for advice (I never seemed to need it—it appeared to me always as if I already knew what was the best course to pursue), others were constantly consulting me. But I have learned by bitter experience how fallacious this theory is. When my father fell into the pit by following my suggestions—then first the seer recognized her own blindness. I know what you will say now,—She is going to insist on the indispensable necessity of prayer, united with the constant study of Holy Writ. No ; I was just about to point out the insufficiency of these remedies. As it is said in the Bible, ' Ask, and you shall receive.... knock, and it shall be opened unto you,' a person who flies to his God or his Bible for guidance whenever he feels himself undecided what course to pursue, is of course forced to determine afterwards what are the signs among the various winds with which he will be assailed ; which are from heaven and which from earth. Now it is in the exercise of his judgment in this healthier position that I observe he is again liable to be egregiously deceived. You know that I am a Christian, at least by profession and education. I must also inform you that I have never omitted

saying my prayers night and morning once since I was six years old, and that in doing this, as I advanced in life, one of the things I have always prayed for has been that I might be guided rightly. My father also was rather a zealous Protestant ; and yet only think what has been my career ? And I will here call your attention to a singular instance of the deceptive nature of this species of navigation. Don't you remember my dream ? I am convinced I never should have been deceived so egregiously the second time, if it had not been for the feeling of certainty I derived from those strange lights that it was God's will I should marry him. A thing we seldom remember is, that many of these signs come from the devil. With prayer and reflection we might get on pretty well, if it were not for the prince of this world and his innumerable allies both in and out of the flesh ; but I am certain now that we are as likely to be deceived by them as by anything. In fact, I should be more afraid now to go by them than by an opinion derived from observation confined exclusively to facts springing directly from purely social or natural bases. It is not, therefore, prayer and the Bible that I am going to proclaim as the remedy for the great evil I am suffering from at present. You can form no idea of the nature of my feelings. I feel like one suddenly struck blind, and as yet unprovided with a guide I can trust. I dare not act, and yet I dare not ask advice, because I know nobody whom I may regard as perfectly trustworthy as an adviser. You will perhaps say here,—a *clergyman*. I could never trust one, simply because they are constantly running down the practice of submitting one's judgment to the guidance of others, and even going so far as to say that an assemblage of nearly all the bishops in the world is not capable of arriving at an infallibly correct judgment regarding so simple a thing as the meaning of a passage in the Bible. I know they are all ready enough to guide and to advise ; but who could have any confidence in the guidance or advice of men who talk in this way. The more I hear, and see, and know of the parsonic spirit, the more I am convinced that it is a thing they imbibe at Oxford and Cambridge, and not the Spirit of God. I don't know how it is, but this is to me startlingly clear. The most estimable of them seem still only to be going by their own feelings in all they do and say. They never give

you the idea of being mere rational instruments or tools as I know who do. I should perhaps at present speak only of one. Willibald Cowley, of course, you will say. No; I would almost as soon consult a parson. The man of my choice now is a certain fat, black, dirty, greasy-looking parish priest—the writer of the letter which put the truth about us in such a crushingly triumphant form before the public, when we seemed to be quite beyond the power of any human being to rescue us from the resentment of our deluded enemies. I don't know how it is, but all that comes from this comfortable and very amusing personage accords with the first dictates of reason, and amuses chiefly because it is ridiculously true. In other words, he is always uttering truisms, but with a look such as in general accompanies the enunciation of a *bon mot*; therefore it goes for a *bon mot*, though it is only in effect *twice two are four*. The man's eye, too, always looks at a part of me that nobody else's eye ever contemplated. He doesn't appear to see my exterior. He never seems to notice my expression, my forehead, my 'make,' or my *tout-ensemble*; but it is something, as it were, beyond the visible that he seems to be staring at whilst he talks. Then, again, he seems incapable of regarding me in any other light than that of a child, and I feel his soul all about mine in such an odd way that, methinks, if I would, I couldn't now behave disrespectfully to him. Now, when I consider that the principles of this man require that he should speak and seem exactly as he speaks and seems to me, viz., as if he had learned nothing but truth, and could relish no other mental food, and was endowed with a trustworthiness inviting unlimited confidence, and when I add to this the abundant experience I have now had of my own utter inability to move safely in any matter of importance without a guide, the conviction is unavoidable that this is a man sent from God to give me testimony of the light. He is not the *light*. I know that perfectly well. It is the error of Protestants to grasp the Bible and say, If we have the light itself, what need we of guides?—confounding the writing of those who were not themselves the light, but only sent, like St. John, to give testimony, which they did by writing as well as preaching, with Christ himself;—a most pernicious error, the evil fruits of which are seen in their intellectual pride, and the self-sufficiency which throws them

with such force upon the letter that killeth, that the voice which teaches obedience,—i. e., the constant daily display of docility and tractability, a very different thing from the activity proceeding from a man's own notions,—speaks to them now only to be laughed at. Therefore he, it is true, is not the light ; but, by acting to me as a guide, he gives testimony of the *light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world*, but not distinguishably from other lights without this exterior testimony. Of this, my certainty, the result of downright experience, is so great that I would not now advise that we should at once return to England, without first submitting my impression in favour of this step to the judgment of Father Bluebeard. So that you see now I am regularly in for it. The papists have got hold of me, and I have begun already to tell stories to them about the parsons, which make them laugh 'ready to split their sides,' and me, too.

"Don't trouble yourself, dearest, in your reply to this, to send me any controversy, because I know nothing about theology—it isn't that which I am running after, but *guidance in all matters*, and, *among others, religion* of course. At present, I have got no further than finding a guide. By-and-by, I suppose, I shall learn from him the true principles of Christianity, and the best mode of practising it. But you may endeavour, if you please, to point me out a person better fitted to be my adviser than him I have chosen.

"I remain," &c.

CHAPTER LIX.

Muse not to see some mud in clearest brook :
They once were brittle mould who now are saints ;
Their weakness is no warrant to offend :
Learn in their faults what in thine own to mend.

R. SOUTHWELL, S.J.

A NARRATIVE commonly ceases to be interesting when the lives of those whose adventures it purports to record have ceased to be *visibly* disturbed. Internal struggles and conflicts of the will with spiritual enemies who silently assail the imagination, but are eventually repulsed, are able, when faithfully described, deeply to interest a class of readers who never look into a novel, but they weary those whose own conflicts are not with shadows. For this reason, we find ourselves compelled to suspend our narrative here, before our story is fairly completed. All our *dramatis personæ* that are still alive at this juncture have yet many years to live on this side the grave ; but their adventures are at an end. It would not even be necessary, were we to go on, to change the scene again. Still, reader, this was the happiest part of their respective lives.

On the very day, and at the identical moment which witnessed the death of Prince Algorouki, Mrs. Cowley ceased to be tormented by the evil spirit which had held possession of the faculties of her soul, from the hour of its expulsion from the haunted chamber in the villa. The priest, who had so frequently visited Mrs. Cowley during her confinement in the lunatic asylum, was struck with amazement when he heard of this. He said he had little doubt that the spirit, who, up to that time had tormented her, was now become the plague of the wicked one whose death seemed to put a term to its power over the living. It would be difficult to describe the joy of Captain Cowley when the happy news was communicated to him, and with what unbounded happiness he went in a hired carriage, accompanied by the priest and Simon, to bring her home. There are certainly intervals during the dreary period of mortal life, in which it seems as though our souls were allowed to gain some faint idea, by what they then

experience, of what the happiness of the blessed is like. What a rushing together of their hearts did that fond and faithful husband and wife experience, over and over again, when they found themselves once more all in all to each other, as they used to be at the Villa Algorouki, when Willibald and Simon were yet boys ! As their love had ever been quite pure, having its rise in the will, it mattered not to them that they remembered, at that moment, the brevity of human life, because theirs was a happiness which could follow them into the next world ; indeed, it was this reflection which enhanced their joy. Simon, too, he also felt, after the dull, plodding life he had been leading in the metropolis, and whilst he contemplated the happiness of his father and mother, as if his eternal reward were beginning on this side the grave. Nothing now was wanting but tidings from Willibald ; and they came wonderful and fair, yet strange, within a month of Mrs. Cowley's recovery. His letter was an answer to his father's, quoted in a recent chapter. It was long, but, to the parents, too brief :—

“ MY DEAR FATHER,—I am delighted at being at length able to explain those circumstances connected with my behaviour to you, from the period of my reappearance after my long absence to the present time, which your paternal heart has allowed you to contemplate with so much displeasure. But I must begin by assuring you that my love of you, so far from being reduced to the feeling of indifference, which my sudden departure seemed to show, was only augmented by each new manifestation of declining esteem on your part. A promise not to divulge certain circumstances connected with the character and calling of Carmen, with which I had accidentally become acquainted, obliged me to behave in the odd way which annoyed you so much on my return, and to fly from the difficulties that threatened me when Sir Francis Butwell first discovered that he had been imposed upon by this man. I withdrew, too, because I felt that my vocation was in danger so long as I dwelt within the sound of my mother's voice, who, you may remember, was at that time very much opposed to my joining the order of St. Francis. Some reports reached me, leading me to apprehend that your title to the estate of Algorouki was being disputed ; but I did

not know that your rival was my old acquaintance Carmen, until quite lately, when the strange history of his accession, short enjoyment of his newly-gained possession, his renewed engagement to Sophia Butwell, the breaking off of the match for the second time, the mysterious death of Sir Francis, whom I had the happiness of receiving into the Church on his death-bed, and, finally, Carmen's own tragic end, reached me, piecemeal, within the space of a few days. It seems that the same person who warned Miss Butwell before, was her deliverer on this second occasion. Sir Francis, the day after the interview had taken place, in the course of which his daughter made known the change which had taken place in her estimation of her suitor's character, and in her sentiments towards him, left —— with a view of seeing me, whom, he imagined, he should be able to induce to tell him something about Carmen. He was on horseback, accompanied by his servant. At a certain village it was necessary that they should take a guide. It is now satisfactorily proved that this man had been sent there the night before by Carmen, that, in acting as guide the next day to Sir Francis, who, the other knew, was going to pay me a visit, he should give him a wrong direction in a certain part of the ride, and by this means cause him, as if by accident, to fall down a precipice. It is rather remarkable, that as this murder was committed through the impetuosity of a horse, so Carmen, about two months afterwards, whilst engaged in a deadly struggle with Sir Francis's groom, whom he was endeavouring to prevent from capturing the guide spoken of above, was set upon by the horse from which the groom had just dismounted, and struck dead to the ground. I have now some very good news to tell you.

"A great friend of mine, an excellent secular priest, at present the Curé of the Church of ——, at ——, by name Padre Volpicelli, says he is convinced that, with some little management, Carmen's estate, which now escheats to the Crown, may be obtained as a fresh grant by you. This excellent man also says he will speak to the bishop about it, who has great influence with the King. You will remember the venerable bishop,—what a happiness if you live yet to receive his blessing as a restored member of his flock!

"And now for my beloved mother. Father Guardian and I

both shed many tears over her letter to the Queen of Heaven. But it gave birth to other thoughts in addition to these sad ones. Father Guardian says he is convinced it will be heard by our Blessed Lady, and that she will soon recover in consequence, and all our Fathers, in consequence, have had to say mass for her. I shall fully expect to find in your next my most sanguine hopes confirmed.

“I remain,” &c. &c.

The contents of this letter occasioned in the minds of those who read it, such an extraordinary excitement, that each of the party presently withdrew, to seek, by prayer, what was needed for a due appreciation of the many unexpected communications of which they were made up. It might be tedious to the reader to have to wade through an account of the meditations of each, in order to learn what may be stated in a few words; we shall therefore refrain from giving it. All of a sudden, Willibald stood before them all, as it were, transfigured; so that they were filled with confusion when they called to mind all that they had said and thought to his disadvantage in times past. His mother now attributed it to his prayers that she had been freed from the infirmity by which she had been beset, since, yielding to the dictates of her own prejudices, she had set up an insolent counterclaim against a vocation which she now firmly believed was from God. The captain believed that it was to his son chiefly he would be indebted for the recovery of his property, should the impression of the priest mentioned in his letter turn out to be correct. Simon admired the overthrow of Carmen, not doubting that it was the outward manifestation of some hidden victory of the soldier of Christ, his brother. The five months spent by Captain Cowley, his wife, and his son, beneath the roof of their friend the Catholic pastor of —, before their affairs in Italy had taken the happy turn anticipated by Willibald, was a truly happy time, and equally profitable to each of them in a spiritual point of view; so that when, at last, the captain, having received and accepted the King of —'s invitation to possess his forfeited purchase, came to the determination of returning to Italy, they were in a condition to devote the remainder of their lives to the service of the Church, and resolved that all their proceedings, on their

return to the Villa Algorouki, should be regulated to co-operate with those of the clergy for the advancement of religion.

Five years after this period they were still persevering in these wise and most worthy endeavours. Lady Butwell, having embraced the Catholic religion, had become a permanent resident beneath their roof. She had obtained permission of Captain Cowley to erect a school, not far from the villa, for the convenience of the poor peasants scattered over the surrounding hills and mountains, who had hitherto been compelled to bring up their children in ignorance of much connected with their religion which facilitates the perfect practice of it. It was by no means her design to become the means of opening to these villagers a door of direct communication with the wide world without; but that they should become at the beginning of their lives better acquainted with the character and merits of their Redeemer, with His doctrine and their own duties, and with the patriarchs, prophets, and saints; and thus, their beginning being on the mountain of God, with every step be walking heavenward, instead of in the direction of the court of the prince of this world—this was her hope and intention. Much, therefore, was her reflection at the commencement of this undertaking, would depend upon the character of the schoolmistress; who should be versed in the science of the saints, and be full of the wisdom which, for another class of persons, and a wider sphere, shone out upon society from the pen of St. Francis of Sales. The good patroness, therefore, asked the Padre Volpicelli to look out for a fitting person, and he was not long in determining that he could recommend no more suitable person than the female to whom the Butwells had twice been so deeply indebted for timely advice, and in whom the reader will already have recognized Willibald's fellow-prisoner, the once volatile Priscilla. Lady Butwell and the Cowleys were all equally delighted when they heard it, and Priscilla herself was glad enough to be removed from her present situation to a post from which she could so much more plainly see that, in her daily avocations, she was serving Heaven, and not man alone.

She resided at the villa, where she frequently had occasion to play a part in reference to Captain Cowley, in her dealings with the remnants of the gang she had formerly known,

similar, but unbloody, to that of Morgiana in "The Forty Thieves." She was endowed by nature with a power of swaying the affections of persons of the opposite sex—below her somewhat in point of mental culture and endowment—which would have easily sufficed to support the reputation of a Magician, had she coveted a distinction of that kind. From repeated experience, she had become conscious of this power, and resolved now to turn it to the best of accounts. She informed herself of the number of persons, and the general intentions of those men who still held by the traditions which formed the invisible, and now only remaining, link of union subsisting between the members of the band. Cajone was almost the only man personally acquainted with her, who had hated her, and he was now no more—all the others, with scarcely a single exception, were ever ready to be enamoured of her; thus, where a regiment of soldiers would have certainly proved insufficient for the protection of the lives and property of the family with which she was living, she, by the wise and admirable use she made of her personal attractions, was sufficient, not only to turn every shaft from its course that was aimed in that direction, but also gradually to inspire the being who aimed it with the thought of an entire change of life. She lived to teach the children of many of those men the way to heaven, and, when she died, was beatified by acclamation, and invoked as a saint by the poor for miles round.

Simon, as he advanced in life, became less and less inclined to hazard by marriage the tranquillity he enjoyed in his present condition. At last the idea was abandoned altogether, and he devoted the whole of his leisure to literary pursuits. The history referred to on previous occasions in the course of our narrative, was finished, and it is from the pages of that MS. that the materials of this novel have been drawn.

On their first return to the scene of that happiness on which we descanted in the beginning of this narrative, his parents and brother had particularly insisted that Willibald, and nobody but Willibald, should bless the house. They seemed to think it was he to whom the performance of that function of right belonged. He accordingly was the priest on whom it devolved. We mention this because we think it will amuse the reader to hear that, when he entered the haunted

room, everybody laughed, so that he had the greatest difficulty in maintaining that gravity which should accompany the performance of every religious rite. But he himself caused a considerable increase of the involuntary cachinnation by the careful precision with which he threw abundance of holy water on the walls, ceiling, floor, windows, door, keyhole, hinges, cracks, cornices—in short, on every distinct object in the room.

On finding himself reduced to the necessity of leaving the Villa Algorouki, Captain Cowley had at first hesitated what to do about the chapel he had built and furnished himself; but he soon resolved not to attempt to sell it, but to leave it as a thing that he was in no other way concerned with than as a sacristan. “Our Lady conceived without sin” had also been left, though most reluctantly. What had reconciled him to the arrangement was the belief that but a few years would elapse before he should, by the mercy of God, have the happiness of beholding the living prototype in the presence of her divine Son.

On re-entering the villa, they found that the chapel-door had not even been unlocked, the key being exactly in the place where Captain Cowley was wont to hide it when his preparations for a function within happened to be in an unfinished state, and not yet fit to meet the public eye. Curiously enough he was reminded on entering, by the appearance of a number of new wax tapers placed round the figure, and an incomplete row of vases filled with faded flowers, that he had left on the identical feast which witnessed his return. This discovery did not fail to fill all with intense delight; and what had been begun in sorrow was finished with feelings of unbounded happiness, and silent, grateful acknowledgments of the fidelity exhibited so strikingly in the present instance by that judicious mother, who, though sometimes long silent, never forgets those who, however imperfectly, serve her. Think, reader, what must have been the feelings of Mrs. Cowley as she wandered among the neglected flower-beds that had witnessed years ago the happiest hours of her life, cutting roses and carnations, &c., for the decoration of her heavenly mother’s image, which now seemed more beautiful than ever, and to be a loud proclamation, to her own soul at least, of what it had before but silently whispered,—that the title “con-

ceived without sin " was accepted ! It seemed to her as if our Blessed Lady thanked her and all those who,—unassisted by any supernatural means, and simply by the force of speculation, inspired by the intense desire they have to attain to a full knowledge of the real position of this brightest luminary in relation to God and man,—had derived a feeling of the utmost confidence that she was conceived without sin.

Mrs. Cowley, it will be perceived, was eminently, though wayward and most difficult to mould, a disciple of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She had, in a rather improper, because a haughty and impatient, spirit, chosen her to be her sole guide and model. An experienced friend, acquainted with the exact state of her interior touching this matter, would have said,—She will not despise, but neither will she spare you, so stand prepared—though, if you could foresee the trials that await you, you would humble yourself, and pray to be led some other way. The elementary lessons she then threw from her were now to form the study of her declining years ; but she lived in the region of love, like the child ere it is sent to school, and therefore the A B C, which gave her so much trouble, was also the constant source of that unfailing joy which is the certain recompense there of application.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

Fair soul, how long shall veils thy graces shroud ?

How long shall this exile withhold thy right ?

When will thy sun disperse this mortal cloud,

And give thy glories scope to blaze their light ?

O ! that a star, more fit for angels' eyes,

Should pine on earth, not shine above the skies !

R. SOUTHWELL, S.J.

ABOUT six years after the return of his parents to the villa, Willibald was sent to dwell beneath their roof in quality of domestic chaplain. On being desired to choose a chamber for his cell, he selected the haunted room. Remembering his fancy for them in times past, as a place of retreat when he wished to be alone, his parents left the adjoining suite of rooms in the same state in which they found them on return-

ing to the villa, which was such as to entitle them now, more than ever, to the appellation of a wilderness. An utter vacancy,—excepting that old forsaken cobwebs lowered in the corners near the ceiling, and that occasionally, but by no means so often as in rooms more frequented,

“The blue fly sang i’ the pane,—”

reigned there; whilst the weather-stained glass, deadening the brightness of the sun’s rays when he was shining, and excluding the fresh air, caused Willibald to feel more *cut off* from the breathing world without, when he walked up and down these rooms saying his office, even than in the cloisters of his convent.

He took his meals alone, and never went out, excepting to visit sick people in the neighbourhood, when he was usually accompanied by his mother or Simon. His absence at meals and in the drawing-room in the evening, instead of causing the pleasure of his company to be missed, made every one feel *sans souci*; for, whilst all felt that the absentee was perfectly happy, they could not but rejoice at the opportunity which was constantly offered them by his absence for making an offering of his unremitting attention to the Divine Presence.

Simon, the sketcher, the observer, the chronicler, was charmed with this state of things; besides, he still had a good deal of intercourse with his brother. His literary pursuits frequently gave him occasion to visit his cell to ask questions which a good theologian only, such as Willibald had now become, could solve. At such times he never found him the less cheerful and communicative on account of his retired manner of living. Indeed, a known effect of solitude is the heightening of the animal spirits, which, however, as sound traversing a conductor cannot be perceived without the intervention of a sounding-board, requires, of course, a visitor to prove it.

“It is exactly this day fifteen years,” said Simon to his brother, one beautiful afternoon, as they descended the steps leading down to the terrace extending along the front of the villa, “that you were walking up and down here reading the life of St. Thomas, when the Butwells’ carriage first made its appearance here.”

"Is it, indeed?" replied Willibald. "How little did I think at that time that anything more than a temporary interruption of our quiet was to result from that approach! Sophia Butwell was running wild. She knew not God; she knew not where or how He was to be found; she cared not when she found Him; and, full of the mischief that in her was the form of the corruption she had inherited from our first parents, she was, in effect, just then little more than a devil in human form. But, like holy David, oppressed by the atmosphere of her own corruption, she cried out at last, *Renew a right spirit within me*; and, faithful to His promise never to turn a deaf ear to the prayers of those who hunger and thirst after justice, our Lord came instantly to her relief, and raised up her mind, so as to enable her to see His own Divine face. I often admire the extraordinary patience He displays in cases of this sort, where the character of the person demands what may be called a premature communication of His elevating inspirations. How agonizing to Him must have been the first vehement protestations of the glorious St. Mary Magdalen! St. Margaret of Cortona actually got a repulse. Years of penance elapsed before she was allowed to call Him brother: and now, at last, Miss Butwell has been made over for preparation for her eternal union not even to a person of the divine sex."

"Ah, and don't you remember," rejoined Simon, with animation, "that on the same occasion Cecilia Bianconi was here? Lady Butwell had a note this morning from her daughter, in which a speech of the Mistress of Novices, just uttered for her edification, is quoted. It was to this effect,—'You are too much attached to your own sense of things. The rule is to regard our own sense of things as of the least importance of any, whereas you, no doubt with the greatest simplicity, evidently look upon your own with as much reverence as you would evince were it revelation. But your present look, although rather fierce, assures me that in a very short time I shall be able to add to the list of your many victories the eradication of this habit.'"

"The net in which she struggles," replied Willibald—"the same, I mean, that holds ourselves and all our belongings—is strong as it is firmly held, otherwise Sir Francis would not be where there is such good reason to believe he is at pre-

sent. I really entertain very sanguine hopes indeed that we shall one day all meet in heaven."

"And so do I," responded Simon, cheerfully; "in the mean time, however, we are at liberty, I suppose, to show forth by our life the joy we derive from this hope, and I accordingly vote now for changing the subject. Stop here a minute. Sit down and contemplate that scene, and then tell me what your thoughts are."

Not a breath of air was stirring. The sky was cloudless, and appeared tinged in the usual way near the western horizon, as this part of the earth fled from beneath the sun's far-spreading light. The beholders, had they had it in their power, would have had it move very slowly just now, that they might enjoy the scene a little longer. The distant cream-coloured tower of the old castle, rising from the wooded mountain-summit, was the sign Simon had obeyed when he bade his brother sit and meditate.

At last Willibald spake,—

"Just as the ancient heathen temples commended themselves to the first Christians by their beauty for consecration to the service of the true God, so do these stones still continue to interest me, but differently from formerly. So strong still is my affection for them, that I feel in their presence as if they were a part of me; and it is not strange that my soul should be thus glued to the scene of those impressive lessons which I received whilst I was there. An act of reparation also is due to the Divine Majesty for the innumerable outrages committed against Him there. Wouldn't it be just the place for a Chartreuse?"

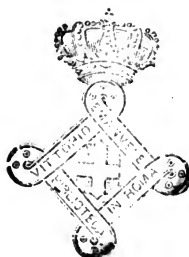
"Exactly," replied Simon. "Let us take Lady Butwell to see it. I am almost sure she wants to build a monastery or church somewhere: this, perhaps, is the locality destined to be the scene of her pious foundation."

What does the reader infer from the tenor of this fragment of a conversation? Probably, that the dream was realized—that the old castle was turned into a monastery or a church. We are sorry to be obliged to undeceive him. The ruin still remains a ruin, whilst he who would have disturbed the mysterious stones has long been in his grave. Dead also are his father, mother, and brother. They died before Willibald, and the world now knows nothing more of the family than is

recorded in the above narrative ; for the mouldering remains of the Villa Algorouki are so silent upon the subject, that the following lines, from the pen of a living writer, induce us to suspect he had seen and mused on the fading scene of most of the events we have just recorded when he wrote them :—

“ So white and dull it stood
Before the myrtle wood,
So silent, shattered, sleeping, and unseen,
Methought some nameless crime,
In past unreckoned time,
Cursed yet its floors, and closed its shutters green.”

THE END.



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